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**Aspect, Temporal Ordering
and Perspective
in Narrative Fiction**

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Hold to the now, the here, through which all future plunges to the past.
Joyce (*Ulysses*: 186)

Abstract

Throughout the reading process, a narrative text produces various sensations of immediacy or distance. One important reason for this is that a narrative will in some places present situations from a particular *perspective*, with which the reader is implicitly invited to identify, while in other places it will describe situations as independent of any perspective. If a perspective (that of the narrator, or that of a character in the text) is introduced, the narrative reflects an individual's (potentially fallible) perceptions, attitudes or beliefs; and this creates the impression of perspectival immediacy. If no perspective is introduced, on the other hand, the narrative pretends to relate "objective facts" within the fiction; and this creates the impression of perspectival distance.

Thus the contrast between *perspectively situated* and *perspectively non-situated* sentences in a narrative produces perspectival refractions. The difference between both types of sentences, however, is often felt to be recalcitrant to a full linguistic analysis. For example, it is generally assumed that the perspectival status of a sentence is determined by the presence or absence of *subject-oriented* elements in the sentence. But although such elements play an important role in focusing perspective, they need not occur in a sentence for the sentence to be perspectively situated.

In Chapter 1 of this dissertation, we draw attention to an observation which has received very little attention in the existing literature on perspective: ⁵perspectively non-situated sentences typically move narrative time forward (in the sense that the order of the sentences on the page mimics temporal progression on the imaginary time line of the narrative), while perspectively situated sentences do not convey forward movement in time. In other words, there appears to be a relationship between *temporal ordering* and *perspective*. Our aim is to specify the precise nature of this relationship.

To do so, we first of all try to establish what determines the temporal relationship between consecutive sentences in narrative. We take as the starting point for our discussion some recent theories in the field of formal semantics which define this relationship in terms of the *aspectual type* a sentence belongs to. In Chapter 2, we explore to what extent these theories enable us to explain the apparent correlation between temporal ordering and perspective in narrative texts.

In Chapters 3–5, we propose a detailed analysis of the relationship between the aspectual properties of sentences and their perspectival characteristics. Our central claim is that sentences exhibiting a *state profile* always introduce a perspective into a narrative. We try to make explicit why this is the case.

In Chapter 6, the conclusions of this analysis are integrated into a more general theory of perspective in narrative fiction.

Notational Conventions

In this thesis, the following notational conventions are used:

Example of Convention	Description of Convention
<i>a linguistic example</i>	Linguistic examples in the body of the text are in italics.
A displayed example	However, in displays, linguistic examples appear in roman type.
<u>This</u> is an example	In displayed examples, the particular item of interest appears underlined. Underlining will also be used to indicate an anaphor and its antecedent.
[The dog] suddenly [...] died	Material that has been added to make a real-text example easier to understand appears in square brackets; where material has been excised, three dots appear between square brackets.
(She looked up.) Dark clouds were gathering	In real-text examples, clauses that introduce perspectively situated clauses will be put between normal brackets.
The horses is brown	A sentence or phrase which is ungrammatical is denoted by a preceding ‘’.
?I haven’t an oat	A sentence or phrase whose well-formedness is questionable is denoted by a preceding ‘?’.
#Red has hicoughed.	A sentence or phrase which is grammatical but unacceptable in the given context is denoted by a preceding ‘#’.

The readers, writers, narrators, and other *dramatis personae* in this text will all be referred to by means of feminine pronouns.

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Chapter 1

Perspective in Narrative Fiction

Texts are lazy machineries that ask someone to do part of their job. Umberto Eco: *The Role of the Reader*.

1.1 Introduction

Questions concerning the nature of the observations readers make about narrative texts have never ceased to plague literary theory, and it has recently been argued, with increasing insistence, that rather than producing studies of individual texts as objects which are assigned a particular meaning, one should instead study the process of *interaction* between texts and their readers (e.g. Dillon 1978; Iser 1978; Eco 1979; Meyer 1981; Ruthrof 1981; Crossman 1983). The idea underlying this type of approach is that textual meaning is not a static text-immanent property, but a changing construct which gradually emerges as the reader extracts information from the text.

Part of this information concerns the *perspective*, or *point of view* from which situations in a narrative are presented. By perspective we mean a position within the imaginary reality of the narrative which serves as a kind of angle on what is being described. As in its everyday use, the term is not restricted to perception (from which angle is the fictional world being perceived?)—it may also denote a *conceptual* or *psychological* position (who is thinking, feeling, judging...?).¹

¹More fine-grained distinctions are made in the literature, the most influential being the one coined by Uspensky (1973). Uspensky analyses point of view in terms of different “planes” or “dimensions”; he distinguishes between point of view on the ideological or evaluative plane, on the psychological or perceptual plane,

The identification of the perspective or point of view which governs a narrative constitutes an important part of text understanding since

our understanding of point of view determines to a large extent our perceptions of the novel's value system and its complex of attitudes. (Stevick 1967: 86)

1.2 Perspective at text level

In the study of perspective there are three main tendencies: the *typological* one (of which Stanzel and Friedman are the most influential exponents), the *formalist* one (represented by the work of Genette and Prince), and the *post-formalist* one (found, for example, in the work of Lanser).

In the first two types of work, the focus is on general distinctions between different types of narrative transmission, which are typically formulated in terms of (some of) the following criteria:

- Is the narrator *personalised* (as in first person narratives) or *not personalised* (as in third person narratives)?
- Does the narrator situate herself *inside* or *outside* the fictional world—in other words are the worlds of the characters in the narrative and the narrator identical or not?
- Is the narrative perspective *internal* (thoughts, feelings and perceptions are reported) or *external* (the narrative restricts itself to what is visible to an observer)?

On the basis of criteria like these, various classifications of perspective in narrative have been proposed over the years.

Friedman (1955) provides a description of eight types of narrative transmission, ranging from *editorial omniscience* (the narrator's point of view is not restricted in any way), via *I-witness* on the spatial and temporal plane, and on the phraseological plane. Although these categories may in practice blur or overlap the distinction provides a useful starting point for a stylistic analysis of point of view. Fowler (1982) updates Uspensky's account and applies it to English.

and *I-protagonist* (the narrator is a character in the text whose point of view is by definition restricted) to *camera-eye* (everything in the narrative is presented from the outside).

Stanzel (1969) develops a “grammar of fiction” which distinguishes between three types of narrative mediation, namely *first person narration* (the narrator is personalised and visible as a character within the fictional world), *authorial narration* (the narrator is personalised and visible but outside the fictional world), and *figural narration* (the narrator is invisible and her place is taken by a figural medium).

Genette (1972) introduces a distinction between *heterodiegetic narratives* (the narrator is not personalised), *homodiegetic narratives* (the narrator is personalised but outside the fictional world), and *autodiegetic narratives* (the narrator is personalised as a character within the fictional world).

Prince (1982) proposes to distinguish between an *unrestricted point of view* (the narrator has complete freedom and privilege), an *internal point of view* (everything in the narrative is presented in terms of the knowledge, feelings and perceptions of one of the characters) and an *external point of view* (everything in the narrative is presented from the outside).

In all of these works, point of view is viewed as a relatively stable text-immanent property. A third approach to perspective, in the post-formalist tradition, attempts to open up perspective to a more dynamic description by defining it as a *relationship*. Lanser (1981) does so by applying some of the central concepts of *speech act theory* to literary texts:²

Every speech act [...] implies a point of view, a relationship between the speaker and the context, the listener, or the context of the communicative act. (Lanser 1981: 64)

Viewed in this framework, perspective can be defined as

a complex network of interaction between author, narrator(s), characters and audiences both real and implied. (Lanser 1981: 13)

²Other studies of literary texts as speech act include Ohman (1973) and Pratt (1977).

Lanser's analysis of perspective relies on three types of relationships: *status* (the relation of the narrator to the speech act), *contact* (the relation between the narrator and the (implied) reader), and *stance* (the relation between the narrator and the textual world). Status, contact and stance are characterised as "dialectically intertwined" (Lanser 1981: 94).

1.3 Perspective at sentence level

As in the typological and formalist work on perspective Lanser's main concern is with identifying the perspectival characteristics of a *text* (novel or short story). If narrative understanding is viewed as a dynamic process of interaction between reader and text, however, perspectival issues can also be approached at a different level.

When reading a narrative, a reader encounters a string of clauses or sentences³ each of which present her with a *situation* or *state of affairs*. The reader has to build a *structured representation* of these states of affairs, and determine for each state of affairs how it is to be integrated into the model she is building of the narrative. One of the relevant tasks in this respect is to determine the perspective which governs each *sentence*.

In general, statements in narrative fiction are immune to judgments of truth or falsity, because they lack actual reference. One of the typical genre characteristics of a narrative, however, is that it presents the reader with an *alternative world*, in which judgments of truth and falsity *do* apply.

As a result of this, situations in a narrative can be described in two ways. They may either be presented as *facts* within the fiction, in the sense that their truth status within the fictional world is inferred to be independent of the (potentially distorting) presence of a subject. We will call sentences in narrative which portray situations in this way *objective*. Alternatively, situations may be presented as reflecting a subject's (potentially mistaken or unreliable) perceptions, opinions or judgments. Sentences in narrative which describe situations in this

³I use the term clause or sentence to refer to a syntactically non-embedded tensed clause. A sentence may, of course, consist of more than one clause. I assume that *Edward got up and then he brushed his teeth* is one sentence containing two clauses; and I shall assume the same of *Edward got up and then brushed his teeth*; the absence of a subject in the second conjunct is less important than the presence of a tensed verb. In general I shall confine my attention to main clauses; however nothing of importance hangs on this.

way will be referred to as *subjective*.

As all statements in a narrative are ultimately assigned to the text's narrator, a narrator can thus assume two *roles*: that of a *narrative authority*, which presents situations in the narrative as independent of any perspective; and that of a *subject* whose (spatial, temporal and attitudinal) situatedness always by definition implies a particular perspective.

Clearly the authority assigned to a narrator will to some extent depend on some of the textual characteristics referred to in the previous section. If a narrator is omniscient, for example, the reader will assign greater authority to her than in the case of a personalised narrator with limited privilege. But even if a narrator is a protagonist in the story, so that her point of view is by definition restricted, the reader will interpret some of her statements as more *objective* than others, and view them as constituting the *reality* of the fiction; through a particular use of language, in other words, a narrator may disguise her identity as a subject, by drawing attention to the referential nature of the fiction and the story told.⁴

If perspective is studied at sentence level, it follows from this, two questions immediately arise. When are sentences in a narrative interpreted by the reader as subjective statements by the narrator, so that they describe a state of affairs from the narrator's perspective? And what distinguishes such sentences from those in which the narrator assumes the guise of an objective authority, so that it appears as if the state of affairs is not presented from her perspective?

1.4 Subject-oriented features

The most obvious answer to both questions is that a sentence is subjective if it contains indications that its semantic content is viewed from a particular (spatial/temporal) position, or coloured by the attitudes, emotions, beliefs or judgments of a subject. The linguistic manifestation of this is found in so-called expressive or *subject-oriented* features—i.e. syntactic

⁴One of the author's strategies may, of course, lie in *highlighting* this capacity of language to pretend at infallibility, by exposing the fiction-creating statements of a personalised narrator as distortions or lies. One of the central themes of Margaret Atwood's *Surfacing*, for example, concerns the protagonist's attempts to reconstruct (parts of her) past by turning them into a narrative. Because passages which the reader interprets as factual turn out to be distortions, notions such as *truth* and *referentiality* are problematised and even fictional "reality" is, in last instance, represented as a construct of the interpretative activities of a subject.

and semantic elements which only make sense if their expressive content can be attributed to a subject. If such features occur in a sentence in a narrative they signal to the reader that the state of affairs described must be interpreted with the caution due to any subjective statement.

Subject-oriented features include

- interrogatory and exclamatory constructions:
 - (1-1) How often she had dreamt of dashing off down an unknown road with Christopher! (Wharton, *Atrophy*: 29)
- syntactically incomplete clauses:
 - (1-2) He *knew*... Good Lord, *exactly* like— (Gordimer, *The Soft Voice of the Serpent*: 24)
- syntactic constructions which simulate the subjective dimension of a thinking or experiencing consciousness:
 - (1-3) How did information that had been in the newspaper become a secret that needed to be whispered in a pig yard? A secret from whom? Sethe, that's whom. He'd gone behind her back, like a sneak. But sneaking was his job, his life; though always for a clear and holy purpose. (Morrison, *Beloved*: 169)
- lexical items expressing an individual's emotions, attitudes, judgments, evaluations, beliefs etc. These include
 - evaluative and qualifying adjectives and adverbs
 - kinship terms
 - nicknames or petnames
 - attitudinal nouns (cf. Dolezel 1976)
 - (1-4) What a mean piece of mischief, that epitaph Aggie sprang on her at breakfast. What an insult, for one thing; for another, what a wound. (Barfoot, *Duet for three*: 66)
 - (1-5) Something had happened—he forgot what—in the smoking room. He had insulted her—kissed her? Incredible! Nobody believed a word against Hugh, of course. Who could? Kissing Sally in the smoking room! (Woolf, *Mrs Dalloway*: 82)

(1-6) Well, its perfectly obvious that's what she's done. The smell. Oh God (a prayer, not a blasphemy), what next? This is too much. This is out of the question, beyond everything.

Really, is it not enough to have to haul Aggie out of bed, and help her get dressed, averting eyes from an appalling amount of old flesh, to get her settled downstairs in her creaky spring-broken chair in the living room, with a plate of something to nibble at and a pile of books beside her? To race around making breakfast for the two of them? To make sure before she leaves for school that Aggie is settled, has what she needs to get her through the day? And then to spend another, probably difficult day in the classroom, edging her way to retirement, which is still five years away? [...] But this is too much. Now what is she supposed to do? Duty is one thing; facing this quite another. (Barfoot, *Duet for three*: 5)

- intensifiers (e.g. *too*, *quite*, *so*):

(1-7) What was really funny was the idea of Mr Cheatam or Alonzo Myers beaung them around. That killed her. (O'Connor, *A Good Man is Hard to Find*: 68)

- emphasisers (e.g. *also*, *just*):

(1-8) Jane Aldis, of course, was much less self-assertive, less demanding, than George Frenway. (Wharton, *Atrophy*: 30)

- attitudinal adjuncts (e.g. *likely*, *maybe*, *probably*):

(1-9) Unspoken is, "You may need one tomorrow." Or maybe she reads too much into words. (Barfoot, *Duet for three*: 250)

- conjuncts which comment upon the connection between items (e.g. *anyway*, *still*, *after all*):

(1-10) Yet here she was on her way to Westover... Oh, what did it matter now? That was the worst of it—it was too late for anything between her and Christopher to matter! (Wharton, *Atrophy*: 30)

- spatial and temporal deixis:

(1-11) Tomorrow was Monday, Monday, the beginning of another school week! (Lawrence, *Women in Love*: 185)

- similes with expressive content:

(1-12) Still, there was no mockery coming from her gaze. Soft. It felt soft in a waiting kind of way. He was not judging her—or rather he was judging her but not comparing her. Not since Halle had a man looked at her that way: not loving or passionate, but interested, as though he were examining an ear of corn for quality. (Morrison, *Beloved*: 25)

- the use of italics to mark various types of empathy, emotion, insistence, contrast etc conveyed in spoken discourse by intonation

(1-13) He *knew*... Good Lord, *exactly* like— (Gordimer, *The Soft Voice of the Serpent*: 24)

- etc.

Some subject-oriented elements (such as attitudinal adjuncts) modify the truth status of a sentence by making it subject to an individual's speculative assessment; others (such as evaluative and qualifying adjectives and adverbs, or the use of emotional deixis) impart a state of affairs with the subjective colouring of someone's attitude; yet others (spatial and temporal deictics, for example) signal that a state of affairs is viewed from a particular spatial or temporal angle. What all of these elements have in common is that they cannot be interpreted except with reference to a *subject* which functions, in a sense, as the antecedent for the expressive content of the clause. I will refer to such a subject as a *subject-of-consciousness*.

1.5 Directly presented perspective

In the light of the foregoing, one would assume that if a clause or sentence in a narrative contains one or more subject-oriented features the state of affairs is described from the perspective of the narrator. And in the following passages this is indeed the case:

- (1-14) The canvas packsack with my clothes has been moved, it's back inside now, on the table with my case; beside it is Anna's detective novel, her last one, cold comfort but comfort, death is logical, there's always a motive. Perhaps that's why she read them, for the theology. (Atwood, *Surfacing*: 170)
- (1-15) I encounter resistance in myself, of course. That is only natural. I am quite young and I am aware that this is a dull life. Sometimes it seems like a physical effort simply to sit down at my desk and pull out the notebook. Sometimes I find myself heaving a sigh when I read through what I have already written. Sometimes the effort of putting pen to paper is so great that I literally feel a pain in my head, as if all the furniture of my mind were being rearranged, as if it were being lined up, being got ready for delivery from the storehouse. And yet when I start to write, all this heaviness vanishes, and I feel charged with a kind of electricity, not unpleasant in itself, but leading, inevitably, to greater restlessness. Fortunately, I am not a hysterical person. [...] I am famous for my control, which has seen me through many crises. By a supreme irony, my control is so great that these crises remain unknown to the rest of the world, and so I am thought to be unfeeling. And of course I never speak of them. (Brookner, *Look At Me*: 18-19)

- (1-16) The fence, as I say, is not what it once was, when this land was truly a farm. It wobbles on its posts, the wire sags, and the only part of it that has kept its tension and purpose is the barbed wire across the top, which may be what hold up the fence post. The barbs make the fence difficult to climb because it is an easy thing to be caught on one as the fence bends under my weight. Each time I say I will come out one day and clip the barbed wire away from the top, but I never do. It belongs. (Barfoot, *Gaining Ground*: 16-17)

If the expressive content of a clause can be attributed to the text's narrator, we will say perspective is *presented directly*. Note that not all of the sentences in the above passages contain subject-oriented features.

1.6 Represented perspective

Now consider the following examples:

- (1-17) But this, this morning, is less to do with memory than with identification: what exactly is different, and wrong? (Barfoot, *Duet for Three*: 2).
- (1-18) Perhaps there was something in this of the old Eden idea; the tender human adjusting himself to himself in the soothing impersonal presence of trees and grass and earth, before going out into the stare of the world. (Gordimer, *The Soft Voice of the Serpent*: 21)
- (1-19) But no, in European hotels, they left your coffee in a pot on your table, along with a pitcher of hot milk, and you refilled your own cup. And there were waiters, with towels on their arms, at the Kaiserin Elisabeth. (Godwin, *A Southern Family*: 107)
- (1-20) But that wasn't it either. I wanted an answer, a completion, not a preparation. (Barfoot, *Gaining Ground*: 66)

None of the sentences (or tensed clauses) in these examples directly quote the words of a character in the text, so that the voice which is speaking is that of the narrator. And since, unlike in the case of indirect speech or thought, all of the above sentences are syntactically non-embedded, one would expect that those which contain subject-oriented features are also governed by the narrator's perspective. This, however, is not the case: in all of the examples the subject-oriented elements are most plausibly attributed to a character in the text different from the narrator. In other words, the sentences are interpreted with respect to a subject-of-

consciousness which functions as the perspectival analogue of a narrator (in her role as subject) *within* the framework of the story. Note, moreover, that this observation does not only apply to those sentences which contain subject-oriented features; the content of the sentences which do not contain any subject-oriented features, too, is most plausibly attributed to a character in the text. The passages in examples (1-17)–(1-20) thus seem to constitute some kind of unit in the sense that they are governed by the same perspective.

Because they reflect the viewpoint of a subject, the sentences in examples (1-17)–(1-20), like those in section 1.5, are *subjective*. Unlike in the case of examples in section 1.5, however, the perspective which governs these sentences is most plausibly identified as that of a character different from the narrator. Because of this we will say they *re-present* perspective—this in contrast with the sentences in section 1.5 which, as we have seen, *present* perspective.

A sentence represents perspective if the perspective it introduces does not coincide with that of the narrator: although the words in the text (or the *voice*) remain the narrator's, the reader is invited to identify with the subjective stance of a character.

Thus a narrative

can choose to regulate the information it delivers [...] according to the capacities of knowledge of one or another participant in the story (a character or a group of characters) with the narrative adopting or seeming to adopt what we ordinarily call the participant's "vision" or "point of view"; the narrative seems in that case to take on, with regard to the story, one or another perspective. (Genette 1982: 161-62).

It follows from this that a distinction has to be made between *perspective* and *voice*, or

[...] la question quel est le personnage dont le point de vue oriente la perspective narrative? et cette question toute autre: qui est le narrateur?—ou, pour parler plus vite, entre la question *qui voit?* et la question *qui parle?* (Genette 1972: 52) [the question which is the character from whose point of view the narrative is organised? and this entirely different question: who is the story teller?—or, manner of speaking, *who's watching?* and *who's telling?*]

Represented perspective obviously constitutes an important stylistic device in narrative: since it allows for the implicit unfolding of aspects of the interior world of a character in the narrative, it makes it possible for a writer to overcome the limitations of equating perspective with voice. Without the narrator's voice being abandoned (as in the case of direct quotation), a perspective can be introduced which in terms of mimetic quality exhibits the characteristics normally associated with (direct) quotation.

From the late nineteenth century onwards the phenomenon of represented perspective has received extensive attention. It is generally agreed that the technique, which is said to constitute "a principal strategy for organising a text according to limited points of view" (McHale 1978: 278) becomes an important element of composition in the modern novel where representing fictional characters as experiencing subjects is a central concern. It is inaccurate, however, to characterise represented perspective as an entirely modern phenomenon. Lips (1926), for example, who provides a survey of the style in French, traces her oldest example back to the ninth century.

The phenomenon of represented perspective is referred by a variety of names, such as *style indirect libre* (Lips 1926) or free indirect style, *substitutionary narration* (Fehr 1938), *narrated monologue* (Cohn 1966), *quasi-direct discourse* (Volosinov 1973), *represented discourse* (Dolezel 1973), *represented speech and thought* (Banfield 1982), and *represented consciousness* (Brinton 1980).

Perspective can be represented in a variety of ways. Some sentences represent *speech*, as in (1-21):

- (1-21) ("Can you come tomorrow?") Yes, he had no engagement at all for tomorrow.

Others represent *thought*, as in (1-22):

- (1-22) Silly, really, to travel with such a big bottle. Her case was so heavy. But it gave one something to do, packing, unpacking. (Drabble, *The Realm of Gold*: 9)

others represent *perception*:

- (1-23) The boy was about fourteen and tall and big for his age, he had a white skin, a dull ugly white covered with freckles, his mouth was a negro's mouth and he had small eyes, like bits of green glass. Worst, most horrible of all, his hair was crinkled, a negro's hair, but bright red, and his eyebrows and eyelashes were red. (Rhys, *Wide Sargasso Sea*: 41)

Represented thought and represented perception are, in the more recent literature (cf. Banfield 1982; Brinton 1980) collectively referred to as *represented consciousness*. Sometimes, however, it is hard to determine whether a sentence or sequence of sentences constitutes thought or perception. The following example illustrates this:

- (1-24) There, absolutely stilled with fear beneath his glance, crouched a very big locust. What an amusing face the thing had! A lugubrious long face, that somehow suggested a bald head, and such a glum mouth. It looked like some little person out of a Disney cartoon. (Gordimer, *The Soft Voice of the Serpent*: 23)

Although the sentences in this example describe what the protagonist perceives, they are also suggestive of his interpretative activity in the act of perceiving. It is therefore not clear whether they should be categorised as represented perception or as represented thought. Because of this, Banfield (1981) offers to replace the distinction between represented thought and represented perception by that between *reflective* and *non-reflective* consciousness, or

[...] experiences that we notice and others that merely happen to us. (Russell, quoted by Banfield 1982: 197)

Sentences which represent consciousness, Banfield claims, may render a character's experiences as unarticulated, unexpressed or not explicitly formulated in the mind, or they may describe them as brought to the level of conscious reflection. She finds philosophical precedent and epistemological justification for this distinction in the work of Descartes, Russell and Sartre (Banfield 1982: 197-199), but also supports it by linguistic arguments. The distinction, she claims, is not merely one in terms of *what* is represented—it also ties in with formal differences. For example, the thinking subject in sentences which portray reflective consciousness is normally referred to by a third person pronoun, while sentences of non-reflective consciousness may refer to the thinking subject by a proper name. Moreover, only reflective consciousness allows exclamations, direct questions and parentheticals.

Brinton (1980) also examines the functional and semantic differences between represented speech, thought and perception. "Reflective represented perception", she claims, is more accurately called "reflective thought", because it is thought about a perception. Likewise, "represented speech" resembles "represented thought" in that it is basically speech filtered through the thoughts of a character. The term "represented perception", Brinton feels, should be reserved for observations dealing with the world outside. Brinton also acknowledges, however, that the distinctions between the three categories are by no means always clearcut. Thus in (1-25), the second clause

(1-25) I walked out beyond the town to look at the weather [:] The bad weather was coming over the mountains from the sea. (Hemingway, *The Sun Also Rises*, quoted by Fehr 1938: 102)

could either be represented thought (in which case "bad weather" expresses a judgment the character has made about the climatic conditions), or represented perception (in which case "bad weather" means the visible aspect of the sky).

While the reflective/non-reflective distinction has obvious philosophical and linguistic interest, I will not explore it any further because nothing immediately relevant for our purposes follows from it. I will use the general term *represented perspective* to refer to clauses the expressive content of which can be attributed to a character other than the narrator. We will also distinguish between *represented consciousness* (which includes both represented thought and represented perception, with no more fine-grained distinctions being made) and *represented speech*.

Cohn (1978) points out that while sentences which represent consciousness⁵ describe states of affairs with the colour imparted upon them by a character's subjective assessment or awareness, they do not imply that the character "recites" their content to herself. Since there are no direct indications as to who is thinking or perceiving, the relationship between the words on the page and the thoughts or perceptions they represent is left latent: "the words on the page are not identified as words running through [the character's] mind" (Cohn 1978: 103). Represented consciousness can therefore not automatically be transposed into the first person, and may be incongruous as a transcript of conscious thought. Because of this the style has a unique mimetic capacity: consciousness can be "suspended on the threshold of

⁵Cohn refers to represented consciousness as *narrated monologue*.

verbalization in a manner that cannot be achieved by direct quotation" (ibidem).

1.7 Subjective and objective sentences

Let us recapitulate. We suggested in the previous two sections that the perspectival structure of a novel or short story (if it is viewed as a narrative process rather than as a product) is characterised by variability and transition, and that the narrator's strategy may shift even from one sentence or main clause to another.

In some clauses, it was pointed out, the narrator may assume the role of an objective authority which establishes what constitutes the "reality" and the "history" of the fiction. To understand such sentences, perspectival inferences do not seem relevant—the question as to the perspective from which the state of affairs is described simply does not arise. The main clauses in the following example are "objective":

- (1-26) Robert went over and seated himself on the broad sill of one of the dormer windows. He took a book from his pocket and began energetically to read it. (Chopin, *The Awakening*: 38)

Other sentences in narrative, in contrast, were said to be subjective in the sense that the reader can only interpret their content with reference to the perspective of a subject-of-consciousness. This subject-of-consciousness may be the narrator, as in (1-27)

- (1-27) Under certain circumstances there are few hours in life more agreeable than the hour dedicated to the ceremony known as afternoon tea. There are circumstances in which, whether you partake of the tea or not—some people never do—the situation is in itself delightful. Those that I have in mind in beginning to unfold this simple story offered an admirable setting to an innocent pastime. (James, *The Portrait of a Lady*: 5)

or a character in the narrative, as in (1-28)

- (1-28) Her life had been so carefully guarded, so inwardly conventional in a world where all the outer conventions were tottering, that no one had ever known she had a lover. No one—of that she was absolutely sure. All the circumstances of the case had made it necessary that she should conceal her real life—her only real life—from everyone about her; from her half-invalid irascible husband, his prying envious sisters, and the terrible monumental old chieftainess, her mother-in-law, before whom all the family quailed and humbugged and fibbed and fawned. (Wharton, *Atrophy*: 28)

Which types of linguistic information does the reader rely on to determine the perspectival status of sentences in narrative? We already identified some of this information in section 1.4: sentences which contain subject-oriented elements will be interpreted as subjective. But upon closer inspection this stipulation is not sufficient: as was already pointed out, many of the sentences in sections 1.5 and 1.6 do not contain any subject-oriented elements, but they are nevertheless interpreted as subjective. It appears, in other words, that they have something in common which leads the reader to interpret them as governed by the same perspective. The central goal of this dissertation lies in making explicit what it is that “glues” sentences such as those in examples (1-4)–(1-20) together, so that the reader interprets them as governed by the same perspective.

1.8 Perspective and temporal ordering

We take as the starting point for our discussion the observation that the majority of subjective sentences exhibit a particular discourse-level property: they do not introduce a temporal update on the imaginary time line which the reader constructs when processing the narrative. A sentence in a narrative introduces a temporal update if it creates the impression of temporal progression within the time sphere of the narrative.

Consider the following examples:

- (1-29) Will parks his silver BMW in the parking space, takes the key out of the ignition, puts it carefully into his pocket. (Atwood, *Spring Song of the Frogs*: 172)
- (1-30) He went over to the washstand and dipped his fingers in water. (Mansfield, *The Man Without a Temperament*: 19)
- (1-31) Julian rose, crossed the aisle, and sat down in the place of the woman with the canvas sandals. (O'Connor, *Everything That Rises Must Converge*: 13)

When processing sequences such as these, the reader infers that the order of the clauses on the page mimics the order in which the described states of affairs occur in the imaginary reality of the narrative. Identifying a specific angle from which the described situations are viewed or assessed, on the other hand, appears to be less relevant. Indeed, all of the clauses in the above passages seem to portray situations “objectively” in the sense that the “reality”

of the fiction is not made subject to the potentially unreliable perception or judgment of a particular individual. Identifying who is seeing or experiencing the states of affairs does not constitute a central concern.

Note, incidentally, that this observation also applies to direct and indirect speech or thought. Such sentences, too, convey narrative movement, while identifying who assesses the situation described (i.e. the fact that something is said, thought or perceived, *not* the content of what is being said, thought or perceived) does not seem to constitute an essential part of their interpretation. As in the examples quoted above, the speech acts or the acts of perception described in the following clauses just “happen”:

- (1-32) “Edna!” called Mr. Pontellier from within, after a few moments had gone by.
“Don’t wait for me,” she answered. (Chopin, *The Awakening*: 52)
- (1-33) She heard a hesitating step in the hall [...] and saw Miss Aldis pause near the half-open door. (Wharton, *Atrophy*: 33)

Compare this to the following sentences, all of which can be called subjective:

- (1-34) The thing is, most of the time when you’re coming pretty close to doing it with a girl—a girl that isn’t a prostitute or anything, I mean—she keeps telling you to stop. The trouble with me is, I stop. Most guys don’t. I can’t help it. [...] Anyway, I keep stopping. The trouble is, I get to feeling sorry for them. I mean most girls are so dumb and all. [...] You take a girl when she really gets passionate, she just hasn’t any brains. I don’t know. They tell me to stop, so I stop. I always wish I *hadn’t*, after I take her home, but I keep doing it anyway. (Salinger, *The Catcher in the Rye*: 92)
- (1-35) It was going to rain. It didn’t matter, he was prepared for it. You didn’t expect anything else in November. (Mansfield, *The Man Without A Temperament*: 14)
- (1-36) She was not ignoring him, she was looking through him at the trees across the road. She was not looking at all, she was listening. (McEwan, *The child in time*: 59)
- (1-37) Everything was vast and open, the sky, the wind blowing along through the swaying, trembling greens, the flowers shaking in vehement denial. Movement... (Gordimer, *The Soft Voice of the Serpent*: 21)

While all of the clauses or sentences in these passages lend subjectivity to the states of

affairs they describe, none of them create the impression of forward movement in time at the level of the main line narrative the way the sentences in examples (1-29)–(1-33) do. The flow of situations which follow each other in time is (temporarily) suspended in favour of a description of the contemplating reflection or awareness of a subject. If there is a hint of temporal movement, this is due to the fact that such contemplation is inevitably expressed in language, and therefore subject to its linear dimension⁶:

Language [...] analyses representation according to a necessarily successive order: the sounds, in fact, can be articulated only one by one; language cannot represent thought, instantly, in its totality; it is bound to arrange it, part by part, in a linear order. Now, such an order is foreign to representation [...] all the elements of a representation are given in an instant [...] they succeed one another with a rapidity so great that it is not practically possible to observe or to retain their order [...] though thought is a simple operation, and its expression is a successive operation. (Foucault, *The Order of Things*: 256)

It seems, therefore, that if states of affairs are not interpreted as occurring in the order in which the sentences are presented on the page, the reader gets the impression that someone is looking, thinking, or judging, and will therefore construct a perspective on the states of affairs described. In the light of this observation, two major issues need to be addressed. The first relates to the temporal structure of narratives: is it possible to make explicit why certain sequences of tensed clauses or sentences create the impression of forward movement in time, while others don't? And second, if we can specify this difference, does the resulting account also enable us to explain the apparent perspectival difference between the two types of sequences? These are the issues which constitute the prime object of investigation of this dissertation. In addressing them, we will implicitly rely on a number of ideas put forward by the French linguist Benveniste and other scholars working in the same tradition. In the following section, we will briefly discuss these ideas.

⁶In this sense utterances in spoken discourse, too, remain vaguely suggestive of the fact that time inevitably moves forward as someone speaks, perceives or thinks. However, this clearly does not constitute "narrative movement".

1.9 Discourse vs narration

1.9.1 The discourse-narration distinction at the level of genre

In his influential article *Les Relations des Temps dans le Verbe Français*, Benveniste advances a thesis concerning the functioning of the French verbal system which is of particular interest to us because it unites both temporal and perspectival issues. Benveniste argues that the tenses of the French verb are not employed as members of a single system, but are distributed into two systems which are distinct and complementary. The distribution of the tenses, he claims, relates directly to the type of language use, or the *genre* (in the broadest sense of the term) in which a verb form occurs.

Histoire, the narration of events, corresponds to written narrative (both historical and fictional), and is characterised by the exclusion of the present tense and the use of the *passé simple* (or, in Benveniste's terminology, the "aorist"):

On peut mettre en fait que quiconque sait écrire et entreprend le récit d'événements passés emploie spontanément l'aorist comme temps fondamental, qu'il évoque ces événements en historien ou qu'il les crée en romancier. (Benveniste 1966: 241) [It can be stated as fact that anyone who knows how to write and who undertakes the narration of past events spontaneously employs the aorist as fundamental tense, whether he evokes the events as an historian or creates them as a novelist.]

In other words, Benveniste points to a correlation between narrative as a genre on the one hand, and a certain concept of time or a way of representing time on the other: the fact that a narrative presents the reader with a story, or a possible history, which can be set out on a time line as a series of temporally related situations, is identified as emblematic or quintessential to its genre. This—fairly uncontroversial—correlation is further linked to a linguistic property: any writer who wants to *narrate*, i.e. present events in a time sequence, Benveniste argues, will intuitively select the *passé simple*.

In addition to this, Benveniste associates *histoire* (standardly translated in English as *narration* or *story*) with a particular *point of view*. *Histoire*, or the narration of past events, he

says, is *objective*: it is characterised by the absence of any reference to the text's narrator:

A vrai dire, il n'y a même plus alors de narrateur. Les événements sont posés comme ils se sont produits à mesure qu'ils apparaissent à l'horizon de l'histoire. Personne ne parle ici; les événements semblent se raconter eux-mêmes. (Benveniste 1966: 241) [In fact, there is no longer even a narrator. The events are set out chronologically, as they occurred. No one speaks here, the events seem to narrate themselves.]

Everything takes place as if, in the historical narrative, the writing subject were saying—[...] "What I am saying, I am not the one saying it, it is writing itself."
(Marin 1982: 103-104)

The objective emphasis of narration or story is, according to Benveniste, further highlighted by the fact that in addition to the present tense it also excludes the first and the second person pronoun, and *shifters* such as "now", "there" and "yesterday". Instead it selects the third person pronoun which is "impersonal" in that it is not opposed to a first or second person pronoun within the direct context of address, and therefore contributes to the exclusion of the speaker from the statement, which is typical of *histoire*:

[...] le narrateur n'intervenant pas, la 3^e personne ne s'oppose à aucune autre, elle est au vrai une absence de personne. (Benveniste 1966: 242) [the story teller doesn't intervene, the 3^d person is not opposed to any other person, there's really an absence of person]

Benveniste thus defines a particular type of language use, namely narrative (either fictional or historical) as the presentation of situations as facts arising at a certain moment in time without any intervention of the speaker: the events seem to tell themselves without recourse to the producing act behind the narrative. He associates the narrative genre with a particular concept of time (a linear one), a particular narrative stance (an objective one : the narrator "disappears"), the exclusion of the present tense, first and second person pronouns and shifters, and the selection of the *passé simple* as main tense.

Histoire is contrasted with another type of language use which Benveniste refers to as *discours*,
or

toute énonciation supposant un locuteur et un auditeur, et chez le premier l'intention
d'influencer l'autre en quelque manière (Benveniste 1966: 242) [all enunciation pre-
supposing a speaker and a listener, and with the former the intention of influencing
the latter somehow]

or

tous les genres où quelqu'un s'adresse à quelqu'un, s'énonce comme locuteur [...]
(Benveniste 1966: 242) [all genres where someone is addressing someone else, puts
himself forward as speaker]

In *discours*, or spoken discourse, both speaker and addressee and the “here and now” of the context of address constitute the central parameters of each utterance. Unlike story or narration, *discours* is not defined by exclusion: the only form which it does not allow is the *passé simple*. However, *discours* typically exhibits those linguistic markers which are excluded by narration, namely the first and the second person, the present tense, and shifters. The third person and the *imparfait* are said to be common to both narration and spoken discourse.

As in the case of *histoire*, *discours* is associated with a particular narrative stance, namely a subjective one. The speaker is not excluded from the statement, as in narration; instead, her position within the communicative context of the act of speaking forms the focus of the most important significations of the discourse.

Benveniste's views deserve our attention because they define the function of certain linguistic elements in terms of both the perspectival characteristics and the temporal characteristics of the genre they are associated with. This clearly ties in with the central concerns of this dissertation as we have formulated them above.

1.9.2 The discourse-narration distinction in narrative fiction

If we try to apply Benveniste's ideas to narrative fiction, however, a problem arises, because Benveniste contrasts two genres, or types of language use, and seems to imply that they are mutually exclusive. As a result of this, the concept of *discours* at first blush seems to be irrelevant for short stories and novels. This, however, is not the case.

Like any other type of language use, a narrative text constitutes a speech act by an agent. In most other genres, and particularly in spoken conversation, this agent can be identified as the speaker, whose subjective intentions generally coincide with the meaning of the discourse. Narrative texts, however, are governed by a different pragmatic phenomenon: the dissociation between, on the one hand, their author (or "real life" agent), and, on the other, a textual agent or *narrator*. As a result of this, the notion of *discours* can be applied to narratives at three different levels.

i. Discourse of the narrative.

First of all, a narrative can be viewed as *discours*⁷ in the sense that it constitutes a communicative transaction between the text's (historical) author and her (historical) audience, the communicative context of which is provided by real world co-ordinates. Studies of literary discourse in this sense take into account the total effect of a narrative text as a superstructural synthesis of different types of information (aesthetic, moral, philosophical, ideological...) encoded by the text. At this level, the pragmatics of the discourse of a narrative cannot be isolated from biographical, socio-cultural, political and other facets of the historical context in which it is embedded. Issues concerning the relationship between the (historical) author and her audience, the intention with which the text is produced, and the characteristics of the cultural context in which the text is embedded, all play a pivotal role in the formation of meaning at this level.

ii. Discourse in the narrative: directly presented perspective

⁷The English equivalent of the term *discours* is typically also used in a more general sense, namely to refer to any (spoken or written) use of (natural) language. Narrative *discourse*, if interpreted in the more general sense of the word, thus refers to narrative as a particular type of language use, with no more specific meaning of the word discourse being implied. In the present context, however, we are clearly giving a more narrow definition to the term.

Throughout the actual reading process, however, a narrative text presents itself as divorced from its actual agent: because of its *medium* (the text) and the characteristics of its *genre* (narrative and imaginary), the author is totally extraneous to the text.⁸ As a result, a fictional narrative constitutes a discourse by an individual who has no existence *except within the text*, so that

[...] the only enunciation to which the signs of discourse in a novel refer us is that which we were led to call pseudo-enunciation, while the signs of the real enunciation are totally absent [...] Thus we have a pseudo-discourse with real signs and real discourse with no signs. (Ginsburg 1982: 144)

The reader, receiving a message divorced from its originator, makes an extremely complex set of inferences about the narrator on the basis of the message itself. (Lanser 1981: 81)

Because of the distinction between the author level and the narrator level in narrative fiction, it is possible for a novel to have different narrators. Clearly a change of narrator will dramatically affect the perspectival structure of a narrative. In the rest of this dissertation we will use the term *text* to refer to a narrative (which may be a novel or short story, but also part of novel or, more rarely, part of a short story) which can be inferred to be told by the same narrator.

Due to the pragmatic dissociation between the actual context in which the real life author participates on the one hand, and the context set up by the text on the other, a fictional utterance has to be decontextualised with respect to the actual, historical world, but is at the same time recontextualised in an (imaginary) alternative world. As was already pointed out, one aspect of this recontextualisation concerns the fact that a narrative will, to varying extents, contain features which cannot be interpreted except with respect to a fictional enunciator, or narrator. In narrative fiction, in other words, signs of discourse *do* refer us back to an enunciating subject, but because their communicative context only exists within the text,

⁸To be more precise, the author as an extratextual entity is obviously to some extent textually encoded—her presence accounts, for example, for organising and titling the text; it is therefore probably more accurate to define the author as “an historically authoritative voice akin to but not identical with the historical person who wrote the text” (Lanser 1981: 152).

they becomes intransitive and self-referential. Another aspect of a narrative's recontextualisation in an alternative world concerns the fact that the narrative sets up its own referential context, within which certain states of affairs are presented as "true" independently of the evaluating and potentially distorting refraction of a subjective point of view. In such cases the narrator "disappears" in the sense that her function is reduced to a purely logico-locutionary one, that can be equated with the mechanics of relating the story.

As a result, the distinction between *histoire* and *discours* can be applied to narrative fiction if it is formulated in terms of different ways of describing the (fictional) world. A narrative presents itself as *histoire* in those places where it establishes the "history" of the fiction, describing situations as temporally ordered events conveying the passage of time as unobserved. Along the same lines, a narrative offers itself as *discours* if it takes the form of an enunciative act, describing situations which are not associated with the linear structure of progression and development in time, but which reflect the temporal awareness of the narrator as subject. Discourse of the narrator in the narrative can, in the light of our discussion in this section, be equated with sentences which directly present perspective. The *histoire/discours* distinction can thus be reformulated in terms of different modes of description rather than as mutually exclusive genres. Similar distinctions are made by Bull (1963), Weinrich (1964), Hamburger (1973) and Lyons (1978).

iii. Represented perspective.

Our discussion in the previous section shows that Benveniste's distinction between *histoire* and *discours* can be applied to narrative fiction if both categories are viewed as ways in which the fictional world is described by the narrator, or as (the linguistic manifestation of) two different roles or guises which can be adopted by the narrator.

One way in which the narrator manifests herself as subject is through the use of linguistic elements which Benveniste calls "shifters"—i.e. spatial or temporal deixis. As we saw earlier, however, such elements may also be interpreted with respect to the (temporal/spatial) position of a subject in the text *different* from the narrator. We also pointed out that the same observation applies to other subject-oriented elements, such as attitudinal semantic markers, intensifiers, emphasisers, etc., in that the subject-of-consciousness they require for their interpretation may also be identified by the reader as a subject in the text different

from the narrator. On the basis of this we distinguished between directly presented perspective and represented perspective, both of which are interpreted with respect to a subject-of-consciousness. In the case of directly presented perspective, or narrator's discourse, this subject-of-consciousness is the narrator, so that perspective coincides with voice. In the case of represented perspective voice and point of view are separated. Because of this the narrator's function becomes purely logico-locutionary; yet at the same time a subjective perspective is introduced. Because the subject-of-consciousness can no longer be identified as the narrator, however, the perspective is introduced indirectly (hence re-presented) and is therefore more opaque.

This can be represented schematically as follows:

	Narration	Represented perspective	Discourse
Narrator's function	logico-locutionary	logico-locutionary	subjective
Perspective	objective	subjective	subjective
Subject-of-consciousness	none	character	narrator

1.9.3 Problems

Person and tense.

Histoire is, according to Benveniste, "objective" for two reasons: it does not contain any speaker-oriented or subject-oriented elements, and it presents situations as events in a time sequence, through the selection of the *passé simple*.

In *histoire*, in other words, two essentially similar types of perspectival information (both of which signal to the reader the absence or veiling of a subjective perspective, and which therefore complement or mutually reinforce each other) are conveyed by different linguistic elements.

Clauses which trigger the impression of forward movement, however, obviously do not exclude the use of the first person pronoun:

- (1-38) He put his head round the door just after six, and nodded, and I picked up my bag and went out to join him. (Brookner, *Look At Me*: 125)

Moreover, first person narration also occurs in the present tense:

- (1-39) I cook the hamburgers and we eat and I wash the dishes in the chipped dishpan, Anna drying; then it's almost dark. I lift the bedding out from the wall and make up our bed. (Atwood, *Surfacing*: 38)

To account for this, different combinations of tense and person in narrative, and their effect, need to be looked at in more detail.

Tense and aspect.

Implicit to the *histoire/discours* distinction, and, indeed, to the general argument presented in this dissertation so far, is the idea that sentences which do not present situations as events in a time sequence—sentences in other words, which do not trigger the impression of forward movement in time—introduce a perspective into a narrative, while sentences which do move narrative time forward do not. If this observation is explored in the context of a process-based approach to narrative understanding, it has to be determined how the reader makes decisions concerning the temporal relationship between successive sentences.

Benveniste's claim is that, to convey the impression of forward movement in time, a writer will spontaneously select the *passé simple*.

Although there are some essential differences between the tense system in French and English, written narratives in English, too, will most standardly encode the English equivalent of the *passé simple*, namely the simple past. But although the simple past may be felt to constitute the tense *par excellence* of narrative fiction, it is, as earlier examples have shown, also possible to convey temporal movement through sequences of sentences in the present tense.

When Benveniste refers to the *passé simple* as a “tense”, he is, strictly speaking, conflating two categories, viz. tense and aspect. Given that sentences in the present tense may propel time, it is obviously not tense in the stricter sense of the term (i.e. as “grammaticalised expression of location in time” (Comrie 1985: 9)) which determines the temporal relationship between consecutive main clauses in narrative. At the same time, we cannot ignore the fact

that present tense narration is felt to be more “unusual” than past tense narration.

To account for these observations, we need to study not only the effect of *aspect* on the temporal ordering of consecutive main clauses in narrative, but also the way aspect interact with *tense*.

1.10 Aims of the dissertation

The central goal of this dissertation is to explore the relationship between temporal ordering and perspective in narrative fiction.

First of all, we will turn our attention to what we call “narrative movement”—i.e. the fact that readers tend to perceive a moving time stream in certain passages of narratives but not in others. I will try to specify when (temporally unmodified) main clauses in narrative move time forward, and when they do not.

Although the phenomenon of narrative movement is central to a number of prominent literary critical accounts, these accounts tend to assume the existence of such a timestream and explore the author’s options for manipulating it (cf. Iser 1974; Sternberg 1978; Genette 1980), without identifying what structures—linguistic or extralinguistic—create the impression of temporal progression in the first place. Most related work in the field of linguistics, on the other hand, focuses on the temporal properties of syntactic constructions (Verkuyl 1972; Heinamäki 1974; Dowty 1972, 1979; Taylor 1977), without considering the effect of such constructions *within* a text.

Issues relating to the temporal structure of narratives, however, have recently attracted the attention of some formal semanticists. In their accounts, which will receive extensive discussion in Chapter 2, the difference between clauses that create the impression of temporal progression and those that do not is related to their *aspectual type*: the former are typically *events*, the latter *processes and states*. I will examine the explanatory power of these accounts and their relevance for the questions we are concerned with.

In Chapter 3, I will explore how the reader decides which aspectual type a sentence in a

narrative belongs to. In the referential accounts discussed in Chapter 2, it is suggested that aspectual conclusions can be derived as a function between various types of intrasentential information—which includes the inherent aspect or *Aktionsart* of the clause's main verb, aspectual auxiliaries, temporal and aspectual adverbials, and complements. It will be shown how, in addition to this, contextual factors and pragmatic inferences also play a role. I will propose an aspectual analysis which integrates all these elements into a unified approach.

On the basis of this, the relationship between temporal ordering and perspective will be explored. Two issues will be central to this discussion. First, is a sentence which creates the impression of forward movement in time always subjective? And second, is a sentence which does not move narrative time forward always objective? I will demonstrate that in both cases the issue is more complex than our analysis in this chapter suggests.

I will advance the idea that some sentences introduce a *perspectival focus* into a narrative, and are, as a result, *perspectively situated*. A perspectival focus is an imaginary position from which a state of affairs is viewed or assessed. It may be occupied by an *anonymous observer* (in which case the sentence is ⁵perspectively situated, but not subjective), or by a *subject* in the narrative (in which case the sentence is both perspectively situated and subjective). The subject which occupies a perspectival focus may be either the narrator, or a character in the narrative.

Sentences which do not move narrative time forward, however, are not by definition perspectively situated: I will show that sentences which are classified as *processes* do not move narrative time forward but nevertheless do not introduce a perspectival focus. Moreover, sentences which do move narrative time forward may still be perspectively situated: sentences which belong to an aspectual category referred to as *contingent states* will be shown to introduce a perspectival focus, despite the fact that they do not move narrative time forward.

To introduce a perspectival focus, I will argue, a sentence has to exhibit the aspectual characteristics of a *state*: states always introduce an imaginary viewpoint into a narrative, which may be occupied by different individuals. This is the central claim put forward in this dissertation. In order to specify why states always introduce a perspectival focus, I will propose an aspectual analysis which crucially relies on two notions: that of a *referential centre*, and that of an associated *meaning structure*. All this will be discussed in Chapter 3.

In Chapter 4 I will explore how the reader identifies a sentence or tensed clause in a narrative as a state. A distinction will be made between *basic state propositions*, which derive their aspectual profile from the lexical-semantic properties of their main verb, and *expanded state propositions*, which derive their aspectual profile from the fact that the aspectual class of their main verb has been changed under the influence of an intrasentential operator or context. A further distinction will be made between three types of expanded state propositions, namely *progressive states*, *perfect states* and *structural states*. We will provide an aspectual analysis of each of these types, and show how, despite their individual differences, different types of states all introduce a perspectival focus.

In Chapter 5 I will provide further evidence for the claim that states are perspectivally situated, by analysing the aspectual type of present tense sentences in spoken discourse in contexts where tense has actual time reference. I will show that in the majority of cases such sentences exhibit the aspectual type of a state, and their perspectival focus is occupied by the locutionary agent.

In Chapter 6, finally, I will discuss other factors which affect the perspectival status of a sentences in narrative. These include the narrator's stance with respect to the fictional world; tense; and subject-oriented features. I will also provide a brief description of linguistic and pragmatic elements which typically play a role in a reader's attempts to identify the individual who occupies a perspectival focus introduced by a state.

Chapter 2

Aspect and the Temporal Structure of Narrative

2.1 Introduction

In the previous chapter, we drew attention to the fact that there appears to be a connection between the temporal structure of sentences in narrative fiction and their perspectival structure: sentences which introduce a subjective perspective into the narrative typically convey the impression of narrative progression, while sentences which do not portray states of affairs from a particular perspective seem to update the narrative. To investigate why this is the case, we need to be able to specify what determines the relationship between successive sentences in narrative. We will first turn to an examination of the main tenets of two formal semantics theories which address exactly this issue.

2.2 Partee's parallel between nominal and temporal anaphora

2.2.1 Discourse Representation Theory

In *Nominal and Temporal Anaphora* (1984), Barbara Partee explores and refines the thesis which was first systematically outlined in Partee (1973), that tense and related temporal categories should be looked upon as expressions the interpretation of which both influences and is influenced by the context in which they occur—a view that can also be found in the

early computational semantics work of Isard (1975), and which has come to the fore more recently in Discourse Representation Theory (Kamp 1981a). It is Discourse Representation Theory which constitutes the formal framework on which Partee's account relies.

The idea which lies at the basis of Discourse Representation Theory is that certain phenomena in discourse¹ can only be properly analysed within a model-theoretic semantics by using a model of the discourse instead of merely giving semantic analyses of sentences. Discourse Representation Theory makes use of an intermediate level of representation, "discourse representation structures", which mediates between syntax and model-theoretic semantics. This means that an analysis of a sequence of clauses comprising a discourse proceeds in two steps: after a syntactic analysis of language input, discourse representation rules are applied which map the sequence onto a discourse representation structure, which is subsequently given a truth-conditional interpretation.

One task of the discourse representation construction is the specification of the temporal relationship between adjacent clauses. It is assumed, in other words, that all factors which affect the ordering of successive clauses can to be encoded into their syntax.

2.2.2 Tense as anaphor

Central to Partee's discussion is the notion that tense is an anaphoric device. The proposal of Partee (1973) to treat tense morphemes as analogous to pronouns is slightly modified in Partee (1984), which concedes that temporal anaphora is more complex than nominal anaphora. Nevertheless, Partee argues, the behaviour of past tense clauses can be likened to that of pronominal anaphora in that their interpretation is dependent on an antecedent which can be recovered from context. This antecedent may have been explicitly introduced in the previous discourse, for example, by a temporal adverb or an adverbial clause. If an antecedent has been established in this manner, past tense will invariably be interpreted with respect to it. In the following examples, I have used underlining to indicate the anaphoric linkage between tense and adverbial:

¹*Discourse* is used here in the general sense of the term. I will use it in this sense unless I explicitly indicate otherwise.

- (2-1) a At 11 o'clock, Cindy decided to take a break.
 b When Cindy got tired, she decided to take a break.

This behaviour of tense resembles that of the paradigm case of pronominal coreference, in which an anaphoric noun phrase refers to the same individual as a definite antecedent:

- (2-2) Marc plays the piano. He's pretty good at it.

Partee also points to a number of other parallels between the behaviour of tense and that of pronouns. Just as pronouns can be used without linguistic antecedents when their referent is understood to be salient to the hearer, a past tense may be used to refer to an understood particular time that was not explicitly introduced by previous linguistic context:

- (2-3) a I didn't turn off the stove. (e.g. uttered while driving down the motorway)
 b She left me! (e.g. said by a man crying in the street)

It can be observed that the temporal anaphors considered so far are taken to have definite reference; however, tensed clauses may, like pronouns, rely for their interpretation on an indefinite antecedent. Compare, for example:

- (2-4) a Pedro owns a donkey. He beats it.
 b Mary woke up sometime during the night. She turned on the light.

Partee also compares the use of pronouns as bound variables to that of temporal bound variables, as in

- (2-5) a Every woman believes that she is happy.
 b Whenever Mary telephoned, Sam was asleep.

And finally, she cites some temporal analogues of "donkey-sentences" (Geach 1962):

- (2-6) a Every man who owns a donkey beats it.
 b Whenever Mary telephoned on Friday, Sam was asleep.

Partee (1984) proposes that the meaning of tenses should be represented in the same way as that of pronouns into a DRT-based account. Central to this account is a version of Reichenbach's (1947) referential theory of tense, in which the notion of *reference time* plays a crucial role. Indeed, as has been pointed out by Bauerle (1979) and Hinrichs (1986), it is not *tense per se* that is interpreted anaphorically, but the reference time of tense.

Reichenbach (1947) proposed to analyse semantic distinctions in the area of temporal reference in terms of three temporal entities. Of these, the speech time S and the event time E are self-explanatory. A third time, the reference time R , corresponds to the notion of “the time that is being talked about”, or

the temporal standpoint from which the speaker invites his audience to consider
the occurrence of the event (Taylor 1977: 203)

As we have seen, on Partee’s approach the antecedent for past tense clauses may be provided by either linguistic or non-linguistic context. As a result, the past time operator is no longer defined as amounting to “at *some* time in the past” as in standard Priorean tense logic; rather it refers anaphorically to a particular (contextually or cotextually determined) reference time. Similarly, the reference time for a present tense clause is analysed as being provided by a non-linguistic antecedent (the speech time), illustrated in

(2-7) That is outrageous!

or by linguistic context, as in the historical present:

(2-8) At that moment, the bomb explodes.

In a DRT-based approach a tensed clause is always to be interpreted with respect to a reference time, which is provided by non-linguistic context or, as is usually the case where written narratives are concerned, by linguistic context. Temporal adverbs are automatically interpreted as providing a descriptive characterization of the reference time with respect to which a tensed clause is to be interpreted. They may either identify this reference time completely (as in *at 9 o’clock on June 12*), or simply put bounds on it, as in the case of “frame adverbials” like *yesterday* or *in June*.

Partee also follows Kamp (1981b, Kamp & Rohrer 1983), in claiming that the significance of tense in texts, and specifically in narrative discourse, lies primarily in the temporal relation it establishes between the sentence in which it occurs and its preceding discourse. If the reference time of a tensed clause in narrative is not specified by means of an adverbial, tense will still be interpreted as context-dependent: its main function consists in signalling to the reader how the information in the new sentence is to be incorporated into the representation

already constructed from the preceding text. In the next section we will see how this idea can be integrated into a DRT framework.

2.2.3 Events, processes and states

More “traditional” tense semantics has concerned itself primarily with the truth conditions of isolated sentences, rather than with the interpretation of a discourse consisting of several clauses or sentences. Consider (2-9):

(2-9) Nigel packed his bags, said goodbye and left.

A standard Priorean analysis would state that (2-9) is true if there are times in the past—say t_1 , t_2 , and t_3 —such that Nigel packed his bags at t_1 , said goodbye at t_2 , and left at t_3 . However, the temporal relation between these three times could be quite arbitrary; perhaps each a year apart, or indeed with t_3 preceding t_2 preceding t_1 . But this obviously does not suffice as an account of the temporal relations in this particular stretch of discourse, which clearly conveys a definite temporal order between the events described in the consecutive sentences. These intersentential relations should be incorporated into whatever it is that determines the truth-conditions of a piece of discourse as a whole.

Partee aims to solve this problem by making explicit how the sentences in a discourse are integrated into a time-related representation of the state of affairs talked about in the discourse, viewed as a continually updated context. To do so, she relies on a number of discourse representation rules which, as was mentioned above, take certain types of syntactic information as their input. The discourse rules for the temporal ordering of discourse are formulated as dependent on the *aspectual type* of each new sentence in the discourse. Following Hinrichs (1986; also Bach 1981; 1986) Partee classifies the aspectual types of sentences as *events*, *processes* or *states*; these are taken as primitives. These types are defined as emerging from the interaction between *atomics*—i.e. whole tenseless clauses which, following Vendler, are classified according to their aspectual class—and a number of *sentence operators*, such as progressive, past and perfect (cf. Hinrichs 1981). The resulting aspectual type of the sentence serves as input for the discourse representation construction, and will consequently contribute to determining the relationship between a new sentence and its surrounding discourse.

Partee's central thesis is that only sentences which exhibit an event type can convey the impression of temporal progression; state and process types, on the other hand, do not move narrative time forward. In terms of the framework of this thesis, this would mean that events are perspectively situated, while states and processes are perspectively non-situated. We will return to this claim in Chapter 3.

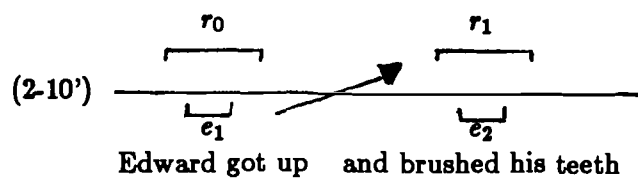
Events differ from states in terms of the DRS construction rules they trigger. The first difference concerns the relationship between the state of affairs described and its reference time: while events (for which we use the variable e) are defined as included in the current reference time (r)—that is, they lead to the introduction of a DRT condition of the form $e \subseteq r$, states (s) are characterised by the fact that they include the reference time at which they are evaluated—represented by the condition $r \subseteq s$.

Second, a distinction is made in terms of whether or not a new reference time is introduced after processing the sentence: sentences exhibiting an event type are said to set up a new reference time which may act as antecedent for the anaphoric interpretation of a subsequent event description, while process and state descriptions do not. As a result of this, events in simple past narratives move the action forward in time, while processes and states locate a new state of affairs at the reference time of the last-mentioned event. The impression of temporal movement triggered by some sequences of sentences in narrative discourse is thus explained in terms of a principle of automatic updating of reference times after events, together with the stipulation that events are temporally included within a current reference time.

The following example illustrates this temporal movement:

(2-10) Edward got up and brushed his teeth.

In (2-10), the event *Edward got up* is interpreted as included in the current reference time r_0 (probably provided by previous discourse) and sets up a new updated reference time r_1 . The next event-description *Edward brushed his teeth* is interpreted as included in r_1 . Anchoring these findings to a time axis as illustrated in (2-10') accounts for the forward movement of time created by the sequence in (2-10):



States (and processes), on the other hand, include the current reference time, and do not introduce a new reference time for subsequent reference. This explains why the third clause in (2-11)

- (2-11) Edward got up and brushed his teeth. He was feeling depressed. He wasn't ready to face the day.

can be interpreted as overlapping with the previous event (since it includes the current reference time), and why the fourth clause can be specified as simultaneous with the third (no new reference time has been introduced, and the state includes the current reference time). Following Hinrichs (1981), Partee also notes that while states and processes are required to include the current reference time, they need not overlap with the event that led to the introduction of that reference time. This stipulation makes it possible to account for examples such as (2-12), in which the fourth clause, which exhibits a state type, does *not* overlap with the event description which precedes it:

- (2-12) Jameson entered the room, shut the door carefully, and switched off the light. It was pitch dark around him, because the Venetian blinds were closed. (Hinrichs 1981: 66)

2.2.4 The notion of “just after”

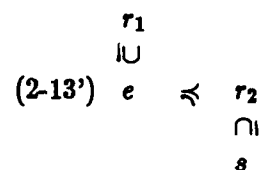
Partee further refines her formal treatment of the temporal relationship between consecutive event descriptions by introducing the notion of “just after”: in the absence of temporal adverbials, the reference time made available by an event sentence for subsequent reference is to be located “just after” or “immediately after” it. This notion is vague, but deliberately so. As Kamp (1981b) puts it, two events can be said to “immediately follow” one another when no event relevant to the overall pragmatic purpose of the discourse occurs between them. Thus, the proximity of the reference time of a new event description to that of a preceding one is determined by the general nature of the events described—their duration, the degree

of detail they convey, etc.

Let us slightly simplify (2-12) to highlight the relevant parts:

(2-13) Jameson switched off the light. It was pitch dark around him.

The relationship between the two clauses is captured by the following diagram, where e is the event of switching off the light, s is the state of being pitch dark, \subseteq represents the relation of temporal inclusion, and \prec represents the “just after” relation:



Thus, e occurs within the current reference time r_1 , and triggers the introduction of a new reference time r_2 that follows “just after”; r_2 in turn includes the state s .

Finally, it may be noted that temporal adverbs are processed before the main clause and serve to update the current reference time. If a sentence contains such an adverb, therefore, it overrides prior context, and more specifically the stipulation that the reference time of the new main clause is to be interpreted as coming “just after” the last-mentioned event.

2.2.5 Reference times

Partee (1984) presents a number of reasons for replacing the idea of a direct anaphoric connection to event times (proposed in Partee (1973)) by a theory in which reference times are crucial.

As already pointed out earlier, the principle of updating reference times after a simple past event description, and the stipulation that simple past events are temporally located within the current reference time, make it possible to account for the impression of forward movement in time triggered by sequences of clauses exhibiting an event type.

But reference times also have an important function when it comes to specifying the relationship between expressions which are supposed to indicate a temporal overlap with the last

(2-14) Jaime was building another boat. He sang happily as he worked, and the muscles of his brown arms rippled in the sun.

(2-14') build sing ripple

(2-14")

build

sing

ripple

37

- (2-15) Jameson entered the room, shut the door carefully, and switched off the light. It was pitch dark around him, because the Venetian blinds were closed. (Hinrichs 1981: 66)

The stipulation that a state which follows an event surrounds the new reference time introduced by the event, but need not overlap with the event itself, allows for the inceptive reading that the fourth clause requires—something which would not be possible without invoking the notion of reference time.

Finally, the difference between the two discourses in (2-16) cannot adequately be explained without recourse to the notion of a reference time:

- (2-16) a At that point, Harry arrived. Mary phoned the police.
b At that point, Harry arrived. Mary was phoning the police.

When looked at in isolation, it is hard to specify what exactly the differences in truth-conditions are between *Mary phoned the police* and *Mary was phoning the police*. Yet in the context of other sentences, the difference emerges very clearly, as (2-16) illustrates. Kamp's DR rules, which specify the relationship between the clauses contained in (2-16a) as one of precedence, and those in (2-16b) as one of overlap, appear to successfully capture what distinguishes the two stretches of discourse.

2.2.6 Partee's treatment of sequenced main clauses

Let us recapitulate. Applying the discourse interpretation rules outlined in this section to a discourse segment such as (2-17) would result in a discourse representation structure as in (2-17'), where \subseteq indicates temporal inclusion, and \prec stands for the "just after" relation discussed before:

- (2-17) Anna walked downstairs and went outside. It was snowing. She began to shiver.

		r_0			e_1 =Anna walked downstairs
		\sqcup			
	e_1	\prec	r_1	s_1	e_2 =Anna went outside
(2-17')			\sqcup	\sqcup	
			e_2	\prec	r_2
				\sqcup	s_1 =It was snowing
			e_3	\prec	r_3
					e_3 =Anna began to shiver

The structure in (2-17') is to be read in conjunction with further conditions which would appear in the complete discourse representation structure. It can be paraphrased as follows: e_1 is the event described as *Anna walked downstairs*. Since this sentence contains a simple past, it is interpreted as having occurred at a contextually or co-textually specified time in the past, called r_0 . The simple past event e_1 introduces a new reference time r_1 "just after" or "slightly later than" e_1 . This reference time will be used for the interpretation of the next event, labelled e_2 . Since this event is also described in the simple past, it is identified as having occurred within the current reference time, and sets up a new reference time r_2 . The next eventuality, *It was snowing*, is a stative, since it is described by means of a progressive, and does not move the narrative forward. It is represented as surrounding the current reference time r_2 , and does not introduce a reference time of its own. The event *She shivered*, which is also described in the simple past, is then interpreted with respect to r_2 , which is still the current reference time, and introduces a new reference time r_3 for possible continuations of the narrative.

2.2.7 Problems

i. Aspect and syntax

While the formal framework proposed by Partee provides an illuminating account of particular temporal phenomena in discourse, it is not without problems. The first concerns one of its main tenets—viz. that a syntactic subcategorization of clauses according to their aspectual type serves as input for the discourse representation rules. A large variety of constituents play a role in determining which aspectual class a clause belongs to. These include lexical material (the aspectual class or *Aktionsart* of the main verb), progressive and perfect auxiliaries, temporal and aspectual adverbials, and indefinite plural noun phrases and mass nouns in various sentence positions.

If all these components and their interaction can be encoded into a syntactic description, this observation does not pose any problems for Partee's and Kamp's theory. This assumption, however, is questioned by Dowty (1986), who claims that it is the *semantic* properties of the relevant categories and constituents which are responsible for the ultimate aspectual

properties of the sentences in which they occur, so that it is only in the model-theoretic interpretation of a sentence that its aspectual class is fully apparent. Since this compositional model-theoretic interpretation is determined only *after* a discourse representation has been constructed, Dowty's observation does pose a dilemma for the theory, since it implies there would be a conflict between the use of DRSs as intermediate constructs between syntax and model-theoretic interpretation on the one hand, and the role of the model-theoretic interpretation in determining properties of the sentence on which DRS construction rules depend on the other. We will come back to this issue in the next section, where Dowty's approach will be discussed in more detail.

ii. "Being associated with"

As we saw earlier, Partee draws a parallel between the behaviour of tensed clauses and that of pronouns: both, she claims, rely for their interpretation on a contextually established entity.

But Webber (1987) has recently pointed to some differences between the two linguistic categories. As was observed earlier, the antecedent for past tense event clause ϕ (unless modified by a temporal adverbial) is provided by a preceding event clause which sets up a new reference time. In such cases, the tensed clause ϕ refers to a temporal entity that is *implied by*, rather than explicitly mentioned in, a previous event description. In contrast with pronouns, which co-refer with their antecedents, events do *not* just co-refer the same time as the previous clause. Moreover, whereas personal pronouns refer back to a previously introduced entity without adding a new referential entity to the model of the discourse, events refer to a previously introduced temporal entity and create a *new* temporal entity that can be used for subsequent reference.

Because of this, Webber argues that it is more accurate to draw a parallel between the anaphoric nature of tense and that of definite nominal descriptions. These, she claims, exhibit a capacity to create a new entity which can be used for subsequent reference. Thus in (2-18), for example,

(2-18) We unloaded the picnic. The beer was warm.

the nominal expression *the beer* relies for its interpretation on a previously established entity which has been implicitly set up by the expression *the picnic*. In the case of a definite NP, this new discourse entity is characterised as “strongly associated” with the antecedent. In the case of tensed event clauses it is a new position (or “node”) on the time line under construction, which provides a reference time for a later event description and which can be described as “strongly associated” with the first event, by which it is implied.

Webber gives backbone to her analogy between tense and definite descriptions by showing that the various similarities in antecedent-anaphor linkages displayed by both tense and pronouns also apply to definite NPs. Like tense, she points out, definite NPs may either co-specify with their antecedent (as in the (a) examples below), or specify a new entity that is “strongly associated” with the antecedent (as in the (b) examples):

- Non-linguistic antecedents

(2-19) The car won’t start! (said by a man in the street)

- Indefinite antecedents

- (2-20) a I picked up a banana. Up close, I noticed the banana was too green to eat.
b I picked up a banana. The skin was all brown.

- Bound variables

- (2-21) a Next to each car, the owner of the car was sleeping soundly.
b In each car, the engine was idling quietly.

- Donkey sentences

- (2-22) a Everyone who wants a car must fix the car himself.
b Everyone who owns a Ford tunes the engine himself.

Webber concludes that the different kinds of antecedent-anaphor behaviour that Partee calls attention to in order to support her analogy between tense and pronouns can also be used as arguments for an analogy between tense and definite NPs. Moreover, the latter parallel also encapsulates a capacity that both tensed event clauses and definite NPs share (viz. the

capacity to introduce a new entity into the discourse that is strongly associated with the antecedent and is unique by virtue of this association); pronouns lack this capacity.

This observation seems valid, but gives rise to further questions. First of all, it has to be specified what it means for an event to be “strongly associated” with another event: does this “strong association” merely denote a (pragmatically determined) “just after” relationship, or does the link that a reader typically perceives between successive events also embrace another connection between them which is not purely temporal? This question is especially relevant for us, because we want to determine why event clauses as a rule describe states of affairs as perspectively non-situated. To establish why this is the case, we need to get a clear picture of the types of relationship which typically govern successive event clauses in narrative.

Secondly, Webber’s observation about states of affairs being “strongly associated” with each other applies only to event descriptions. It might be possible to extend it to other aspectual types, however, if the notion of “being associated with” could be specified in other than purely temporal terms. States and processes do not (normally) introduce a temporal update into the discourse; in Partee’s terminology, they do not introduce a new entity associated with them—that is to say, they do not set up a reference time “just after” them for subsequent reference. But this does not exclude the possibility that states and processes introduce a new discourse entity for subsequent reference which is associated with them in some other way. To establish whether this is the case, we need to explore further what “being associated with” may mean in terms of the types of relationships that may hold between successive main clauses in narrative. Again, this issue is of particular relevance for us because it may throw a light on the relationship between temporal ordering and perspective.

iii. Sentence aspect vs. discourse aspect

The issue raised in the previous section—what are the most salient ways in which states of affairs in sequenced main clauses may be associated with each other?—is also relevant in another respect: it may make it possible to determine how *pragmatic inferences* affect the temporal ordering of successive main clauses in narrative discourse.

As we have seen, Partee’s account tries to capture the different relations that hold between

consecutive clauses in narrative in terms of just two main discourse interpretation rules, formulated in terms of the aspectual type of each new sentence concerned. First, events introduce a new reference time “just after” them for subsequent reference, while states and processes do not. And second, events are included in the current reference time, while states and processes surround it. While these two rules make it possible to account for a great number of cases, in other instances they make either incorrect or imprecise predictions.

First of all, some sequences of event do *not* convey the impression of forward movement in time. Consider, for example, (2-23):

- (2-23) Beyond the window a car starts up, an aeroplane passes overhead. (Lively, *Moon Tiger*: 207)

According to Partee’s discourse interpretation rules, the reference time is moved forward after processing the first clause (which is an event description) and the next event has to be interpreted with respect to this new reference time. But in this instance this prediction is incorrect: no particular ordering is conveyed between the two states of affairs described.

Moreover, when Partee’s discourse interpretation rules are applied to the passage in the following example,

- (2-24) In the morning, father and mother took us part way up a mountain. [...] We left very early, while it was dark still. (Boyle 1987: *Natives Don’t Cry*: 46)

this would result in a representation in which the second clause *We left very early* is interpreted as coming *after* the first one; this, too, is clearly wrong. It seems, rather, that “leaving early” is *part of* the event described by “being taken up a mountain”.

And in (2-25),

- (2-25) John fell. He slipped on a banana skin.

time seems to be moving backwards, despite the fact that both sentences constitute event descriptions which, in sequence, are predicted to propel time forwards.

It appears that in such and similar instances, inferences about the temporal order between consecutive events are affected by the reader’s assumptions about the relations that hold

between them—in other words, by a search for coherence structured on other than purely temporal principles.

Another issue not adequately accounted for by Partee concerns the fact that state descriptions can sometimes be interpreted as introducing a temporal update into the discourse. Thus in sequences such as (2-26),

- (2-26) (1) We mounted, (2) turned a corner, (3) and the village was out of sight.
(Rhys, *Wide Sargasso Sea*: 58)

the third clause *does* move time forward, despite the fact that it exhibits a state type.

Along the same lines, some stative verbs (such as *stand*, *sit*, *realise*) seem to be ambiguous in the sense that they propel time in some contexts, but not in others. This is illustrated by the following two sequences; in the (a) example, the second clause triggers a temporal update (*sit* is interpreted as an event), whereas in the (b) example, the *sit* clause is interpreted as a state (or a process) and does not introduce a temporal update.

- (2-27) a He takes a chair and sits on the balcony (Mansfield, *The Man Without Temperament*: 17) (temporal movement)
b Calixta, at home, felt no uneasiness for their safety. She sat at a side window sewing furiously on a sewing machine. (Chopin, *The Storm*: 1) (no temporal movement)

A similar observation applies to the way processes are contextualised into a narrative. Thus for (2-28),

- (2-28) Her pulses beat fast, and the coursing blood warmed and relaxed every inch of her body. (Chopin, *The Story Of An Hour*: 83)

Partee's account correctly predicts that the clauses, all of which are processes, will be interpreted as simultaneous and overlapping. But in (2-29),

- (2-29) (1) The plate missed, (2) and hit the refrigerator, (3) but the pie flew and (4) caught him on the side of the face as in the old movies or an I Love Lucy show. (Munro, *Chaddeleys and Flemings*: 18)

the third clause, which is also a process, *does* update the narrative.

As we have seen, Partee attributes the fact that states sometimes do not overlap with a

preceding description to “pragmatic inferences”. But given the fact that such inferences may overrule all of her predictions about the relationship between aspectual types and the way they are temporally ordered with respect to the surrounding states of affairs, this stipulation is unsatisfactorily vague.

Clearly, we need to make a distinction between the types of temporal ordering standardly imposed by *sentence* aspect, and other organising principles at the discourse level which may overrule the latter. The question is whether it is possible to specify such principles and to integrate them into a theoretical framework. This will be explored in chapter 3, where it will be argued that referential accounts take too simplistic a view of the nature of a temporal referent. It is usually assumed that the entities referred to by tensed clauses are simple points or intervals on a time line. We will suggest that a more complex ontology is involved, and that states of affairs may be organised under two different types of relationships, termed *contingency* and *topicality*. We will discuss each of these in turn.

Following Moens (1987) and Moens & Steedman (1988), contingency is a relation between states of affairs which embraces more than purely temporal sequentiality. To represent it, we will employ a meaning structure which links the states of affairs subsumed under it in terms of contingency relations like causality and enablement. We will refer to such a structure as a *contingency structure*.

Relations of temporal progression, precedence or inclusion between consecutive states of affairs will be captured in terms of this contingency structure; in such cases, we will argue, each new state of affairs is placed in a part of the contingency structure associated with the previous state of affairs.

Standard types of discourse ordering among events will be explained in terms of the requirement that events evoke a contingency structure, and therefore are associated with states of affairs standing in some appropriate contingency relation. This approach has three advantages over the one proposed by Partee. First of all, it allows us to explain why events normally introduce a temporal update without having to make recourse to a rule which stipulates that they always do so. As a result of this, other types of temporal ordering among events (namely precedence and inclusion) are no longer in conflict with the theory, since the rule which stipulates that events always introduce an update has been abandoned. Second, in the approach

we propose such temporal relations can be accounted for without having to invoke additional rules or principles. And finally, by incorporating the notion of contingently related states of affairs into our theory we will be able to make more explicit one of the principal ways in which states of affairs in narrative discourse may be associated with each other.

As mentioned earlier, the second type of relationship which governs the interpretation of successive main clauses in narrative discourse will be referred to as a *topical* one. This relationship will be represented in terms of a non-episodic meaning structure consisting of a number of topically related states of affairs assessed at the same interval. We will refer to this as a *topical structure*.

The typical discourse function of sentences exhibiting a state or a process type will be explained in the light of the fact that they evoke a topical structure, and thus are associated with topically related states of affairs. This makes it possible to account for the observation that states and processes in sequence do not normally propel time (which again makes Partee's discourse rules superfluous). And in addition to this, it allows us to capture other—non-temporal—relationships which are highlighted by consecutive state or process types.

In our approach, the aspectual profile of clauses in context can largely be explained in terms of the type of meaning structure associated with the (decontextualised) clauses. But the same notions will also allow us to specify how context may overrule standard correlations between aspectual types and temporal ordering.

The concept of contingently related states of affairs will be invoked to explain why states and processes may sometimes be interpreted as introducing a temporal update rather than as overlapping with the reference time of the preceding description: if the reader discerns a clear consequential relationship between two states of affairs, we will argue, she will make salient a contingency structure to interpret them, even if such a structure is not normally associated with the type of aspectual type concerned.

Similarly we will show that a new event will not be interpreted as updating the narrative if, as in the case of example (2-22), the reader cannot detect any relation of contingency—however weak—between the state of affairs concerned and the event which precedes it. All this will be explored further in Chapter 3.

iv. Tense

Another major issue which is not addressed by Partee (or in the related work of Kamp and Hinrichs) concerns the effect of *tense* in its strict sense on the relationship between consecutive main clauses in narrative. Partee restricts herself to an analysis of past tense examples, without discussing whether her conclusions about the context-dependence of the past tense apply equally to present tense narratives. Within a Reichenbachian framework, the difference between a past and a present tense utterance is captured in terms of the relationship that holds between the speech time and the reference time: in the present tense, these coincide, while in the past tense, the reference time is to be situated before the speech time. This will have repercussions for the anaphoric properties of the tenses. As we saw earlier (cf. Bauerle 1979), it is not tense *per se* that is interpreted anaphorically, but the reference time of tense. What needs to be determined, therefore, is the *effect* of these different types of ordering: what does it mean for speech time and reference time to be separated? And in what way does their coinciding affect the reader's understanding of an utterance?

These questions are especially relevant in the case of narrative fiction. Specifying the effect of the separation between speech time and reference time in the past tense is unproblematical if one takes for granted, as Partee does, its deictic/temporal meaning component—the grammaticalization of “pastness”, i.e. a time sphere before the speech time. But this observation only applies unambiguously to types of discourse which are temporally situated, such as oral communication. In narratives, however, the past tense will function as referring to a past time *only* when a speech time is established within the fictional statement, i.e. when the text at some point mimics the time sphere of an actual situation of speech. If this is the case, the past tense will be detemporalised with respect to “real” time, but recontextualised within the internal system of the text, for example as constituting memory, or recall, on the part of the narrator. When a main line narrative is in the past tense, however, it will remain decontextualised with respect to any “real time” (witness the fact that most science fiction is written in the past tense), but will not be situated with respect to a fictional speech time either. And this poses a problem for the theory: how do we specify the difference between the choice of the past and that of the present tense if no deictic/temporal contrast can be invoked? In the approach we propose this problem is taken into account.

2.3 Dowty's approach to the temporal structure of narrative

2.3.1 Compositional semantics

Dowty's analysis of the relationship between consecutive clauses in narrative discourse takes as its starting point some of the observations concerning the movement of narrative time made in Dry (1981, 1983). In the earlier paper, Dry argues that the perception of temporal movement in narrative texts is triggered by references to *changes of state*. In Dry (1983) she broadens this claim: references to changes of state are said to constitute references to *points*—the beginning or end points of situations. The notion of “natural endpoints of a situation”, which is crucial to Dry's argument, is a fairly intuitive one in the account she proposes, and Dowty's aim is to make it precise in model-theoretic terms.

Like the referential approaches discussed in the previous section, Dowty's account is based on the notion that the temporal relationship between consecutive clauses in narrative discourse is determined by the aspectual type they exhibit.

Dowty challenges one central point of DRT and Hinrichs' application of it. He claims that the classification of clauses into aspectual types (which, as was shown in the previous section, plays a crucial role in DRT construction rules) is determined by the compositional semantics of the clause. This conflicts with Kamp's theory, which assumes that the model-theoretic interpretation of a sentence depends on, and is defined in terms of, the intermediate representation produced by the DRT construction rules; consequently, the model-theoretic interpretation cannot also serve as an input to those construction rules as its input. Attempts to treat aspectual class as a purely syntactic property of clauses (for example, by classifying various syntactic categories according to their aspectual class, and specifying elaborate cooccurrence restrictions among them, as proposed by Verkuyl 1972) miss the point, Dowty claims, since it is the *semantic* properties of the various constituents which ultimately determine the aspectual type of the clause in which they appear, and those will only be fully apparent in the semantic interpretation of the clause.

Dowty also points out, as we have earlier, that in some instances the ordering of states of affairs in narrative discourse will be affected at least in part by context and world knowledge:

states, for example, may in some contexts function inceptively. Hinrichs and Partee try to accommodate this problem by stipulating that while states may overlap with a preceding event, they need not do so. They feel it is sufficient to assume that while the content of some, indeed most, states will make an interpretation of overlap likely, this is not required by the theory. They also feel that the conditions under which a state will or will not be interpreted as overlapping need no further specification, since, they argue, the conditions represented formally at this level include only those constraints deemed to follow from structure independently of particular content. Dowty, as already pointed out, contests this by arguing that the two cannot be separated.

The basic idea underlying Dowty's approach is that the aspectual type of a clause can be predicted by applying a number of semantic rules. The aspectual ontology he proposes aims to classify not only verbs, but also verb phrases and sentences. While the aspectual type of a verb is a property of its lexical meaning, the aspectual type of a phrase or clause can be determined as a function of its compositionally derived meaning, that is, on the basis of the interaction of the inherent aspect of the main verb with tense morphemes, aspectual auxiliaries, certain temporal and aspectual adverbials, and other complements. It is, of course, the aspectual type of a clause as a whole which will affect the relationship of the state of affairs described to other clauses in the discourse. But this aspectual type, Dowty claims, can be determined in a mechanical and completely explicit way by applying a number of compositional semantic rules through combining the noun phrases, adverbials, tenses, and other constituents of the clauses with the lexical aspectual class of its main verb.

On the basis of this, clause are classified as belonging to one of three aspectual types—namely accomplishments/achievements, activities, and statives.

2.3.2 Interval semantics

In addition to this, Dowty's theory of the temporal ordering of clauses in narrative makes use of the interval semantics proposed by Taylor (1977) and extended in Dowty (1979). The main tenet of this theory concerns the notion of the truth of a sentence with respect to a interval of time. This means that the truth of a sentence with respect to a given interval *I* is formulated as independent of the truth of the same sentence with respect to moments

within I , subintervals of I , or superintervals of I . This notion is relied on to explain why, for example, the truth of a sentence like (2-30)

(2-30) John ran a mile in five minutes.

with respect to a time interval, e.g. between 1.00pm and 1.05pm, does not imply the truth of the same sentence with respect to a subinterval of this time; indeed, we want to allow it to be false that John ran a mile at a subinterval of I , e.g. between 1.00pm and 1.03pm.

2.3.3 Accomplishments/achievements, activities, statives

Using the notion of the truth of a sentence with respect to a time interval as a primitive, Dowty introduces three defining criteria for the three aspectual types, namely

- (a) A sentence α is *stative* iff it follows from the truth of α at an interval I that α is true at all subintervals of I ; e.g. *Between 3 and 4, I was really tired.*
- (b) A sentence α is an *activity* iff it follows from the truth of α at an interval I that α is true of all subintervals of I down to a certain limit in size; e.g. *Between 3 and 4, I worked in the garden.*
- (c) A sentence α is an *accomplishment* or *achievement* iff it follows from the truth of α at an interval I that α is false at all subintervals of I ; e.g. *Between 3 and 4, I wrote a letter.*

Notice that the three types distinguished by Dowty are essentially the same as those relied on by Partee to characterise the effects of aspectual class on the temporal structure of discourse—Partee refers to them as *states*, *processes* and *events* respectively. Dowty, however, draws attention to aspects of the classification which are not elaborated upon by Partee. For example, he captures the idea that statives and activities have the same subinterval properties (this explains why they are treated alike by Partee’s DRT construction rules); but at the same time he specifies the respect in which they differ (otherwise it would be irrelevant to distinguish between them). Dowty relates this difference to the fact that it is harder to think of activities as obtaining in an uninterrupted fashion the way statives do. This characteristic, however, does not immediately affect their truth-conditional status and the way they are to

clearly circumscribed limits and possible internal complexity). In addition, when they are sequenced, no event of crucial importance to the narrative overlaps with the two successive events or intervenes between them. It is precisely for this reason that Kamp (1979) proposes to represent them at the DRS level as *points*, (even though they may be mapped into intervals rather than instants in the model).

The aspectual categories Partee and Dowty distinguish can schematically be represented as follows:

	Clauses		
Partee	Events	Processes	States
Dowty	Accomplishments/Achievements (false at subintervals)	Activities (true at subintervals down to a certain limit in size)	Statives (true at subintervals irrespective of size)

Within the framework introduced by Dowty, it remains to be specified how these different aspectual types affect the temporal structure of discourse. To do so Dowty introduces two more principles, which we will now discuss.

The Temporal Discourse Interpretation Principle The Temporal Discourse Interpretation Principle (TDIP) states that, for a sequence of sentences to be interpreted as narrative discourse, each new clause will *always* be interpreted at a new reference time “immediately after” that of the previous clause, except when it contains a definite time adverbial, in which case it will be interpreted at a time consistent with this adverbial. This stipulation differs from that relied upon by Hinrichs and Partee in just one respect: it means that not only events (accomplishments/achievements), but also processes and states (or activities and statives) set up a new reference time “just after” them for subsequent reference.

Assumed Reference Times The inferences which we draw in a narrative about how states of affairs are ordered temporally are not merely a consequence of the times at which the states of affairs are *asserted* to be true, according to Dowty, but also of the times at which we *assume* they obtain. This means, in effect, that Dowty’s notion of reference

time is a two-fold parameter. In the rest of this discussion, the asserted reference time of a clause will be referred to as r , and the assumed reference time as r' .

2.3.5 Dowty's treatment of sequenced main clauses

Combining the notion of "truth of a sentence with respect to a time interval" with the two principles just discussed allows Dowty to specify the different temporal ordering relationships imposed by the three aspectual categories.

Accomplishments and achievements, according to the way they were defined earlier (cf. *supra*, (c)), are true with respect to an interval I iff they are false at all its subintervals. It follows from this that they will also be false at all superintervals of I (because otherwise the original condition would be violated). Combining this definition with the two principles just outlined results in the prediction that sequenced accomplishments/achievements will be true at successive non-overlapping intervals. This means, among other things, that in the case of accomplishments and achievements, the times at which they are asserted to be true will *coincide* with the time at which they are assumed to be true.

The definition for stative sentences, in contrast, implies that a stative which is true at an interval I may also be true at a larger superinterval which includes I —this possibility is not in conflict with the original definition. In combination with Dowty's two principles, this results in an interpretation of statives as being asserted at an updated reference time r , but normally beginning to obtain in advance of this point and continuing beyond it (until, or possibly beyond, the next event sentence, depending on content, context and pragmatic factors). In other words, the time r at which a stative is *asserted* is updated, but the time interval r' over which it is *assumed* to obtain can overlap with the surrounding state of affairs. Thus, while the asserted reference times of statives may be brief and closely spaced, the times at which they are assumed to obtain will normally be much longer. As we have seen earlier, however, statives do not always overlap with a preceding event. Dowty accounts for this by adding that while the actual duration of statives will in most cases extend before their asserted reference time, this is actually a *pragmatic* inference which may be cancelled on the basis of contextual or pragmatic knowledge. This explains why statives are in some instances given an inceptive interpretation.

Activities, as already pointed out earlier, resemble statives in their behaviour, and this is reflected in Dowty's approach. Like statives, activities are asserted to take place at an updated reference time r ; and in addition to this, they are permitted—but not required—to have started before this time and/or to continue beyond it, depending on the reader's expectations about the "normal" length of the situation described (which will on average be shorter than that of statives, since the latter normally describe an "inert" situation which will be assumed to hold or persist unless the text explicitly states otherwise), and the surrounding discourse. As in the case of statives, the context of an activity may indicate that no overlap with the preceding state of affairs is to be inferred, so that the asserted reference time r is to be interpreted as the first interval of the assumed reference time r' . Thus, in example (2-32),

- (2-32) John asked where the children were. Mary looked anxiously out the window.

the activity *look out the window* is not understood as overlapping with the previous sentence, but as beginning at its asserted reference time. This is again due to a pragmatic inference, viz. the fact that the reader perceives a causal relationship between the activity and the event which precedes it.

2.3.6 Temporal ordering and point of view

Dowty's treatment of statives, activities and progressives touches upon an issue which is not addressed in Partee's paper, namely the fact that statives and activities are suggestive of a particular point of view. Clearly, this issue is particularly relevant in the context of this dissertation.

Dowty argues that, in the absence of definite temporal adverbials, reference times in a narrative are to be continuously updated, even after statives and activities. Partee, in contrast, claims that statives and activities do *not* introduce a new reference time for subsequent reference. At first sight, Partee's claim seems to be the more accurate one. Take, for example, (2-33:)

- (2-33) (1) John entered the president's office. (2) A copy of the budget was on the president's desk. (3) The president's financial advisor stood beside the copy. (4) The president sat regarding both admiringly. (5) The advisor spoke. (Dowty 1986)

The fact that the statives in sentences (2)–(4) in this passage are normally assumed to extend before the reference time of the stative in (2) and into the time of the event that ends the passage, *the advisor spoke*, is not at odds with Dowty’s theory: it is completely in line with the interaction between his defining criterion for statives and the second principle described earlier. More worrying, however, is the fact that time does not seem to move in the three middle sentences of the narrative; this does appear to be in conflict with Dowty’s Temporal Discourse Interpretation Principle (TDIP), which requires a temporal update of the asserted reference time after each stative.

Dowty argues, however, that this apparent inconsistency can be explained in the light of the distinction he has drawn between asserted and assumed reference times: the duration which the reader assigns to successive (asserted) reference times, and to the intervals between these reference times, depends on assumptions about the normal real-world duration and spacing of events of a given type. Because of this, it is not implausible to assign very brief and closely-spaced (asserted) reference times to statives in a context like (2-33). In such an analysis, the fact that the sequence does not propel time in an obvious way could be explained by the observation that temporal movement is masked by two factors: first of all, the short duration and closeness of the asserted reference times; and secondly, the fact that the actual times at which the reader assumes the states obtain are much longer and overlap.

But this leaves the question as to what the asserted reference times of such sequences refer to. In the case of accomplishments or achievements, or event descriptions, this is not an issue: the asserted reference time denotes the duration of the event, and thus coincides with the assumed reference time; in other words, the sequence of asserted reference times mimics the sequence of events as they occur. But in the case of statives, the assumed reference time (the “actual” duration of the situation described) is normally longer than that of the asserted reference time; so in what terms are we to conceive of the latter?

Dowty’s solution to this is the following. The statives in examples such as (2-33), he argues, are to be interpreted as the perceptual observations that a hypothetical human observer would make in the situation described, which are vicariously relived by the reader. More specifically, this hypothetical observer may be either the text’s narrator, or a character in the text from whose point of view the situation is represented. This means that the time spans denoted by

the asserted reference times of such statives are to be constructed as the time it would take a human observer to perceive these facts about the scene; in other words, it is suggested that the order in which the pragmatically overlapping statives are recorded in the discourse is the order in which some (fictional) observer notices them. And this would be in line with the temporal updating imposed by Dowty's TDIP.

Dowty here implicitly captures an idea which is central to the argument presented in this study, namely that statives often reflect the subjective awareness of a (hypothetical or specific) observer. Dowty invokes the (implied) subjective dimension of statives to support the validity of his TDIP even in cases where time does not appear to move. The TDIP thus only retains its theoretical consistency and explanatory power if a link is established between aspect and point of view. In the next chapter we will propose an approach in which the TDIP is abandoned. Even in our new approach, however, the observation that statives are suggestive of a subjective angle on the state of affairs they describe will remain crucial. We will relate it more explicitly than Dowty does to the referential properties of statives, which are characterised by the fact that their assumed reference time normally extends beyond both sides of their asserted reference time. Although Dowty does not explicitly discuss activities, we infer that the same type of analysis, involving point of view, is intended to apply to them too. On this issue, however, we will adopt a different position. In the next chapter, we will argue that activities (or *processes* as we will call them) are not perspectively situated in the same way as statives.

2.3.7 Problems

The temporal discourse interpretation principle

Let us summarise the main points of the discussion so far. Dowty's analysis differs from Partee's on three central points. First of all, he claims that the classification of sentences or clauses into aspectual types is determined by their compositional semantics, and therefore cannot be an input to the DRT-construction rules. Although Partee acknowledges there is a problem in this respect, she remains agnostic about its solution. We accept, with Dowty, that attempting to encode all aspectual information into a syntactic analysis—even if feasible—is theoretically undesirable.

Second, Dowty introduces a more complex notion of reference time, using two parameters: an asserted and an assumed reference time. We will further develop this idea (which remains fairly rudimentary in Dowty's account), illustrate its relevance for issues concerning the temporal ordering of narrative (which remains unclear on Dowty's account), and specify more systematically how aspectual types can be represented in terms of the interval properties of their asserted and assumed reference times, and the relationship that holds between the two.

Finally, Dowty's analysis does away with Partee's stipulation that in temporally unmarked narrative² only event descriptions update the narrative. Dowty's position is that in narrative, each new sentence or clause is automatically assigned a new updated asserted reference time. He admits that in the case of processes and states this may seem counterintuitive, since the reader does not tend to perceive temporal movement in such sequences. But this, he says, can be explained in the light of the fact that the *assumed* reference times of processes and states are much longer and overlap with neighbouring states of affairs. In other words, it is his distinction between two reference time parameters which enables Dowty to introduce the TDIP.

The introduction of this principle is attractive for two reasons. First of all it simplifies the theory, because it makes one of Partee's discourse rules superfluous. Second, certain phenomena, such as the fact that some processes or states require an inceptive or quasi-inceptive interpretation, can, in the light of the TDIP, be explained without being in conflict with the general lines of the theory.

As indicated above, the account we propose in Chapter 3 does not rely on the TDIP. It differs from Dowty's approach in that while Dowty occasionally invokes general assumptions of causality, entailment etc. to account for types of ordering which his theory cannot accurately predict, we will view these as central organising principles. We will claim that in the case of clauses which create the impression of forward movement in time, the reader's inferences about the temporal ordering of the narrative are based on a mental representation of the state of affairs described in terms of a structure of consequentially related situations. We have already sketched the general features of such an approach. In the next chapter, we will discuss it in more detail.

²I use the term *temporally unmarked* narrative to refer to sequences of main clauses which are not modified by temporal adverbials.

Our claim, then, is that clauses in narrative which introduce a temporal update (in the sense that they move the action forward) do so because the state of affairs they describe can be associated to a preceding state of affairs by a *contingency* relation. If no such contingency relation can be established by the reader, the action is suspended. Since in the latter case temporal/causal inferences no longer constitute the reader's central focus of attention, another type of relationship between the sentence and its context becomes salient, which we earlier referred to as a *topical* one.

Dowty claims that sequences of statives (and activities) can be interpreted as mimicking the temporal sequence of the perceptions or observations of a subject or hypothetical subject. And, as the following passages illustrate, this claim has some initial plausibility.

- (2-34) (Then the boy saw the buck.) It was coming down the ridge, as if it were walking out of the very sound of the horn which related its death. It was not running, it was walking, tremendous, unhurried, slanting and tilting its head to pass the antlers through the undergrowth. (Faulkner, *Go Down Moses*: 183)

- (2-35) The servant girl was in their room, singing loudly while she emptied soapy water into a pail. The windows were open wide, the shutters put back, and the light glared in. (Mansfield, *The Man Without Temperament*: 8)

- (2-36) The manager's personal assistant was speaking to him with a concern he felt was quite misplaced. She was pressing her hand against his forearm, and urging him to drink the tea she had brought. The manager was standing just outside his office complaining to an underling that supermarkets were the favoured territory of child snatchers. (McEwan, *The Child in Time*: 16)

- (2-37) There, absolutely stilled with fear beneath his glance, crouched a very big locust. What an amusing face the thing had! A lugubrious long face, that somehow suggested a bald head, and such a glum mouth. It looked like some little person out of a Disney cartoon. It moved slightly, still looking fearfully at him. Strange body, encased in a sort of old-fashioned creaky armour. (Gordimer, *The Soft Voice of the Serpent*: 23)

However, it is equally possible to interpret the descriptions in these examples as capturing the totality of an impression—visual or otherwise. If there is a hint of temporal movement in these sequences, this is due to the fact that this impression is captured in language and therefore can only be conveyed in a linear order. But it is not implied that this order simulates the sequence of someone's thought or perception; certainly, such an inference does not seem

to be essential for an adequate understanding of the text.

This point is illustrated even more clearly in the following cases:

- (2-38) (A long legged, lovely creature came bounding up the hill.) This was Joy Benson, who came with them to Wales every summer. Betsy paid her a pound a week for being a sort of holiday governess and handy girl; it was not an agreeable situation, but she needed the money, for she had an invalid mother to support. For the rest of the year she taught at a Kindergarten in a provincial town. The Hewitts had known her father, years ago, and it was they who had paid for her education. They had been astonishingly generous. (Kennedy, *Together and Apart*: 42)
- (2-39) Isabel Archer was a young person of many theories; her imagination was remarkably active. (James, *The Portrait of a Lady*: 48)
- (2-40) The structure of the house was hierarchical, with my grandfather at the top, but its secret life—the life of pie crusts, clean sheets, the box of rags in the linen closet, the loaves in the oven—was female. The house, and all the objects in it, crackled with static electricity; undertows washed through it, the air was heavy with things that were known but not spoken. (Atwood, *Significant Moments in the Life of My Mother*: 13)
- (2-41) My name is Frances Hinton and I do not like to be called Fanny. I work in the reference library of a medical research institute dedicated to the study of problems of human behaviour. I am in charge of pictorial material, an archive, said to be unparalleled anywhere else in the world, of photographs of works of arts and popular prints depicting doctors and patients through the ages. (Brookner, *Look at Me*: 5)

What is relevant to the interpretation of such passages is that the portrayal of narrative development in terms of temporally/causally related states of affairs is temporarily suspended in favour of another organising principle. Although the clauses may be suggestive, from a logical and ontological point of view, of the fact that time moves, nevertheless in terms of the way they are contextualised, and in terms of the general effect they trigger, they describe states of affairs that are “a-temporal” and appear to be arrested or suspended in some kind of motionless “now”—a relationship we dubbed “topicality” before. Our approach will capture this effect, and to that extent will be empirically more adequate than Dowty’s.

Dowty’s stipulation that statives and activities in narrative are interpreted as introducing an updated asserted reference time is problematic in other ways.

If we assume that time moves in passages such as those quoted in (2-34)–(2-37) above, representing the successive impressions of a subject, it becomes difficult to specify what distinguishes them from passages like the following one:

(2-42) [...] and she was actually under the Abbey walls, was springing, with Henry's assistance, from the carriage, was beneath the shelter of the old porch, and had even passed onto the hall, where her friend and the General were waiting to welcome her [...] (Austen, *Northanger Abbey*: 167)

In this case too we get a sequence of statives which seem to reflect the subjective awareness of a character in the text. Here, however, time moves as it does in most consecutive events, in the sense that the action unfolds. According to Dowty, the asserted reference time of each new stative always introduces an update, while their assumed reference time may extend at one or both sides of this asserted reference time.

In our approach, the difference between the stretches of narrative in (2-34)–(2-41) and (2-42) can be explained because we provide a unified account of both semantic and contextual information which affects the aspectual interpretation of a (contextualised) clause. The observation that narrative time moves forward in (2-42) despite the fact that clauses concerned are statives is accounted for as follows in our analysis. Although consecutive statives are standardly organised under a topical relationship (as in examples (2-34)–(2-41)), in (2-42) their semantic content makes salient a contingency link between them, so that the sequence propels time forward (in the sense in which we define it). The reader's activity, in other words, is geared towards finding contingency relations between successive moments of perception or consciousness. In Chapter 3 this phenomenon will be explored in more detail.

In summary, a major issue which remains problematic in Dowty's account concerns the fact that his TDIP applies not only to events but also to non-event clauses. We argue that in most cases, sequences of statives and activities are more accurately represented as being interpreted at a fixed, non-updated asserted reference time. Such a representation is intuitively more correct, but it also has a number of other advantages. We also claim that by introducing a distinction between two types of coherence that may govern consecutive sentences in narrative discourse we can make a larger number of predictions about their temporal ordering without having to invoke additional rules and stipulations.

2.4 Conclusion

We have tried to show in this chapter that while both Partee (1984) and Dowty (1986) provide an illuminating analysis of the effect of aspectual class on the temporal ordering of narrative discourse, in both accounts a number of questions are not satisfactorily addressed or solved.

In the next chapter we will propose an approach to the same issue which, although it adopts some of the main principles of the referential theories discussed, offers a more unified account of the relationship between semantics, contextual information and temporal relationships in narrative.

On the basis of this we will formulate a number of predictions concerning the way the aspectual type of sentences in narrative affects the way the described states of affairs are integrated temporally into the reader's structured representation of the narrative. This will allow us to specify which types of sentences introduce a subjective perspective into a narrative.

Chapter 3

Temporal Ordering and Perspective

3.1 Introduction

When a reader encounters a new sentence or main clause in a narrative text, she has to determine where and how the state of affairs it describes is to be incorporated into the evolving situation structure which constitutes a model of the discourse. This means, among other things, that she has to decide what the perspectival status of the sentence is: is the state of affairs it describes portrayed as independent of a particular perspective or is it presented as perceived or assessed from a particular perspective? The aim of this thesis is to determine when a sentence describes a state of affairs from a particular perspective, and when it does not.

In Chapter 1, I drew attention to the fact that in the majority of cases sentences which introduce a subjective perspective do not trigger the impression of forward movement in time. This apparent link between the temporal structure of sentences and their perspectival status constitutes our central object of investigation.

In Chapter 2, I advanced the idea that the precise nature of the connection between the temporal and the perspectival properties of (temporally unmodified) sentences might become clearer if we can identify why some sequences of main clauses propel time while others do not. We discussed two recent articles in the field of formal semantics which address this issue. In

both of these the central claim is that the way clauses are contextualised temporally into a narrative depends on their *aspectual type*. This aspectual type is said to be determined by the clause's compositionally derived meaning. If a clause or sentence exhibits the type of a state or a process, it does not create the impression of temporal progression. If it is classified as an event (or accomplishment/achievement), it does.

Predictions about the temporal contextualisation of successive main clauses in narrative solely on the basis of their compositionally derived meaning, however, may almost without exception be overruled by inferences based on context and world knowledge. The informational content of these appears hard to specify.

In the first section of this chapter we investigate the relationship between sentence aspect, context and temporal ordering. We argue that two types of *non-temporal relationships* may change the aspectual profile of successive main clauses in narrative text, and hence affect the way they are ordered temporally in the model of the text. The first is referred to as a *contingency* relation (which embraces general notions of enablement and causality), the second as a *topical* one. We propose a unified account of sentence aspect and context which relies crucially on the idea that the same situation may be *thought of*, or *conceived of*, in different ways, depending on the aspectual operators the clause contains and the context it occurs in. On the basis of this we will specify when (contextualised) main clauses create the impression that time moves, and when they don't.

In the second part of this chapter we explore the relationship between the aspectual type of contextualised sentence and perspectival inferences.

3.2 Classifying aspectual profiles

3.2.1 Vendler's typology

Over the years, various typologies have been suggested to classify aspectual types, the most influential probably being the one known through the work of Vendler (1967). The central idea behind this taxonomy can be traced back to Aristotle, who coined a distinction between *Kineseis* (performances) and *Energeiai* (activities or states) (Metaphysics: 1048b 18-36).

In the Anglo-Saxon tradition aspectual typologies similar to Vendler's have been proposed, amongst others, by Jespersen (1924), Ryle (1949), Gär^e (1957), Kenny (1963) Allen (1966), Rescher & Urquhart (1971), Bennet & Partee (1972), and Dowty (1979).

Vendler's classification presents a fourfold taxonomy of verbal predicates: it distinguishes between accomplishments, achievements, activities and states. Vendler refers to these collectively as processes.

Accomplishments are defined by Vendler as verbal predicates denoting heterogeneous processes with successive phases, which have a natural endpoint, or outcome, associated with them. Accomplishments thus refer to a time segment which has both intrinsic duration and a final stage which is distinct from its other stages; this is why they are called non-homogeneous: "in case I wrote a letter in an hour, I did not write it, say, in the first quarter of that hour" (Vendler 1967 : 101). Examples are: run a mile, build a chair, recover from illness, paint a picture, write a novel, read a book.

Achievements are characterised as verbal predicates denoting punctual processes without successive phases and without intrinsic duration, which capture the inception or the climax of an act, and as such embody a culmination point. Verbs like recognize, die, start, stop, win the race, find, realize,... constitute typical examples.

Activities are verbal predicates denoting homogeneous processes with successive phases, which do not have a natural culmination point or endpoint associated with them. Activities present processes viewed in terms of their internal temporal constituency, i.e. as continuous or ongoing over an undemarcated time stretch. They are homogeneous in the sense that "any part of the process is of the same nature as the whole" (Vendler 1967: 101). Verbs such as run (around, all over), write, swim (along), push (a card), walk,... illustrate this.

States, finally, are verbal predicates denoting processes without successive phases. Like activities, states are homogeneous and stable: they endure or persist over stretches of time. States also resemble activities in that they are not demarcated on a time line, that is, they do not include reference to an endpoint or culmination; they differ from them in that they do not involve any dynamics, they "cannot be qualified as actions at all" (Vendler 1967 : 106). Vendler defines states as "that puzzling category in which the role of the verb melts into that

of predicate, and actions fade into qualities and relations.” (Vendler 1967 : 109). Desire, love, own (a house), be blond, know, believe, want, resemble are examples of states.

Vendler’s original classification can be represented schematically as follows:

processes with successive phases		processes without successive phases	
homogeneous	heterogeneous	punctual	period
ACTIVITIES run, swim, walk, sing work	ACCOMPLISHMENTS paint a picture, write a novel, build a house	ACHIEVEMENTS recognize, win the race, realize	STATES love, know, believe

3.2.2 Problems with Vendler’s typology

In the context of the questions concerning the relationship between the aspectual type of sentences and their temporal ordering, the aspectual taxonomy proposed by Vendler (and others in the same tradition) is not without problems.

Most importantly, to determine the effect of aspect on the temporal structure of narrative we need a typology which classifies contextualised (main) clauses. Vendler’s taxonomy essentially classifies different classes of verbal predicates on the basis of the aspectual characteristics inherent to their lexical structure. But aspectual distinctions may also be grammaticalised; for example, the same verbal predicate may require to be classified differently depending on whether it encodes simple or progressive aspect, or a single or a plural object. And in addition to this the context in which a clause or sentence occurs may also affect its aspectual interpretation. In other words, factors other than the lexical-semantic structure of a clause’s verbal predicate may have an effect on the aspectual category the contextualised clause (as opposed to a verbal predicate) belongs to.

To capture this, we will follow Dowty in claiming that the aspectual category a (decontextualised) clause belongs to can be determined as a function of its compositionally derived meaning, that is, on the basis of the interaction of the inherent aspectual properties of the main verb with a number of *operators*, which include auxiliaries, certain temporal and aspectual adverbials, and other complements. The function of these operators is described in semantic terms. Put differently, the aspectual profile a (decontextualised) clause exhibits is

specified by applying a number of semantic rules, depending on the type(s) of operator the clause encodes. One such rule, which is of particular importance to us, is that the presence of a progressive or a perfect auxiliary turns a proposition into a state. Clauses exhibiting a state profile because of their lexical-semantic structure are referred to as *lexical states*, to distinguish them from propositions which encode a stative operator, such as perfects or progressives. Clauses may, of course, contain more than one operator.

Some clauses thus derive their aspectual characteristics purely from lexical-semantic material, while others consist of a verb phrase the profile of which has been changed under the influence of an operator in the sentence. The (a) sentences in the following example belong to the former category, the (b) sentences to the latter:

- (3-1) a Jill wrote a letter. (accomplishment)
b Jill was writing a letter. (state)
- (3-2) a The train arrived. (achievement)
b The train had arrived. (state)
- (3-3) a The fire destroyed the house. (accomplishment)
b Fires destroy houses. (state)

Moreover, *context* may change the aspectual interpretation of a clause or sentence, so that it functions, in effect, as an additional aspectual operator. We want to specify this function of context within a unified account.

We will make a distinction between basic propositions (cf. Lys & Mommer 1986), expanded propositions and contextualised propositions. *Basic propositions* are simple clauses from which everything is excluded which we know might change the aspectual type of the expression. This means a basic proposition will exhibit simple aspect, because we know that progressive and perfect auxiliaries change the aspectual nature of a proposition. Moreover, the subject of a basic proposition should be syntactically and semantically singular, and its object should be a singular count noun, which should only be present in the case of a necessarily transitive verb. And finally, a basic proposition should encode a past tense, because the present tense, as we will see in Chapter 5, may also act as aspectual operator. According to this definition, classifying *run* as a process is tantamount to saying that a basic proposition involving this verb, e.g. *she ran*, is typically an expression exhibiting the aspectual properties

of a process.

Expanded propositions are basic propositions which are modified by an intrasentential operator which affects the reader's aspectual interpretation of the sentence, such as, for example, a progressive or perfect auxiliary. A decontextualised sentence, therefore, may either be a basic proposition (if its aspectual type is determined solely by the lexical-semantic properties of its verbal predicate) or an expanded proposition (if the aspectual type of its verbal predicate changes because of the presence of an aspectual operator within the sentence).

Contextualised propositions, finally, are sentences, the aspectual type of which may be changed by the context in which they occur .

If a proposition combines with an operator which changes its aspectual type (either an intrasentential operator or context) we will say its type is *coerced*.

The typology needed for our purposes thus has to classify basic, expanded and contextualised propositions. This means that rather than a static classification of verb phrases or verbal predicates we need a dynamic classification which reflects how the aspectual type of a proposition changes when the proposition is thought or conceived of in a particular way because of the aspectual operator it combines with, or because of the context it occurs in. The typology should enable us to represent, in other words, how the aspectual labels of contextualised sentences relate to those of smaller units such as decontextualised sentences, verb phrases and verbs.

The typology we will rely on is based on a proposal by Moens (1987) to replace traditional static aspectual classifications with a *transition network*. This network differs from earlier aspectual categorisations in that it not only contains a number of categories, but also a number of *transition paths*, which indicate how categories may be coerced into other categories. Moens' typology also introduces a fifth category, viz. that of *points*. In addition to this, we will introduce a sixth one, which we will refer to as *contingent states*.

Our typology also differs from the one proposed by Moens in a number of other respects. For example, we specify the aspectual type of the categories in terms of two (related) criteria. The first concerns the referential properties of the category concerned, or its *referential centre*. The

second concerns the *meaning structure* evoked by the proposition, which may be *contingent* or *non-contingent*. On the basis of this, the function of transition paths is defined in terms of the way the referential centre and/or the associated meaning structure of a proposition change when it is coerced.

The six categories in the aspectual typology we propose are *culminations*, *culminated processes*, *points*, *processes*, *non-contingent states* and *contingent states*. We will now discuss their aspectual characteristics in the light of the two criteria referred to earlier.

3.2.3 Referential centres

When a reader assigns an aspectual interpretation to a proposition, she constructs a mental representation which incorporates the most salient aspectual characteristics of the proposition described. In the rest of this discussion this representation will be referred to as a *referential centre*.

A referential centre is a twofold constellation consisting of two intervals, an asserted reference time r and an assumed reference time r' .¹ The asserted reference time is the time at which a state of affairs is asserted as taking place. If a sentence contains a definite temporal adverbial, this adverbial will always denote the asserted reference time:

- (3-4) a At three o'clock Henry decided to get up.
b At three o'clock Henry was working in the garden.

Frame adverbials, such as *yesterday*, *in 1975*, *last year*, etc. do not specify the asserted reference time of a proposition, but put a frame on it. Thus in (3-5)

- (3-5) Yesterday I went to Waterstone's.

the asserted reference time for the proposition is a time interval within the interval introduced by the adverbial at which the state of affairs is asserted as having taken place.

In temporally unmodified narrative, the asserted reference time for a new clause or sentence is normally provided by a clause which precedes it. This will be discussed in more detail

¹The terms asserted and assumed reference time are briefly introduced in the article by Dowty (1986) discussed in the previous chapter. Dowty's approach does not make use of the concept of a referential centre.

further down.

The *assumed reference time* of a proposition is the interval at which a state of affairs is assumed to take place. In some cases (such as example (3-3a) above), this interval will coincide with the asserted reference time of the proposition. In such instances the referential centre of the proposition will be said to be *symmetrical*. Alternatively, the assumed reference time of a proposition will be inferred to extend at one or both sides of its asserted reference time, as in (3-3b)). If this is the case the referential centre of the proposition is *asymmetrical*.

Two of the six categories in our typology exhibit an asymmetrical referential centre—viz. contingent and non-contingent states. The other four (culminations, culminated processes, processes and points) are characterised by the fact that their referential centre is symmetrical.

Asserted and assumed reference times are time intervals which exhibit one of two interval properties: they may be either *atomic* or *extended*. If a referential centre is asymmetrical its asserted reference time will be atomic, and its assumed reference time extended. If it is symmetrical both intervals may be either atomic (in which case we will refer to the referential centre as an atomic RC) or extended (resulting in an extended RC).

On the basis of this we can further narrow down distinctions between the six categories as follows:

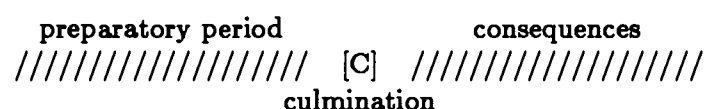
symmetrical RC		asymmetrical RC
atomic RC	extended RC	
Culminations	Culminated processes	Contingent states
Points	Processes	Non-contingent states

It remains to be specified how each of the upper three categories (culminations, culminated processes and contingent states) differs from the one below it (points, processes and non-contingent states respectively). To capture this distinction, which is crucial to our argument, we will introduce the notion of a *contingency structure*.

3.2.4 Contingency structures

Culminations, culminated processes and contingent states are, in our approach, characterised by the fact that their asserted reference time includes reference to a point which brings about a *change of state* and which therefore creates the appropriate conditions for a new state of affairs (which comes after it), by enabling it or causing it. In the case of culminations and contingent states this point is identical to the asserted reference time of the proposition; in the case of culminated processes it constitutes the final boundary of the proposition's asserted reference time.

Aspectual types which make reference to a change have a particular ontological structure associated with them which following Moens (1987) and Moens & Steedman (1988) we will define as consisting of a period leading up to the change of state (or *preparatory period*), the change of state (or *culmination*), and a period ensuing after this change of state (or its *consequences*). Moens & Steedman refer to this as a nucleus. We will call it a *contingency structure*. It can be represented schematically as follows:



The semantic specification of the contingency structure evoked by a given state of affairs will obviously depend on the context in which the sentence occurs. This means it doesn't consist of all situations which can be contingently related to a given state of affairs in real world terms, but rather of those situations which can plausibly be envisaged to be contingently connected to the described state of affairs within the model of the discourse under construction.

In the case of propositions exhibiting a culminated process type, the asserted reference time of the proposition coincides with both the preparatory period and the culmination of the contingency structure associated with the type. In the case of culminations and contingent states the asserted reference time is identical only with the change of state of the contingency structure evoked.

Points, processes and non-contingent states, on the other hand, do not invite association with contingently related states of affairs. The asserted reference time of points and non-contingent

states is not conceived of as a change of state, so that no consequences are to be envisaged after them. Similarly the extended asserted reference time of process types does not include reference to a final boundary after which consequences ensue.

A new sentence in temporally unmarked narrative creates the impression of forward movement in time—that is, introduces an update on the time line under construction—*only* if it can be placed in the consequences of the state of affairs which precedes it. This means that narrative time moves forward only after sentences exhibiting the type of a culmination, a culminated process or a contingent state, all of which include reference to a culmination, and therefore carry intimations of consequences which can be referred to by a subsequent description.

3.2.5 The typology

The properties of referential centres corresponding to the six aspectual types we distinguish between can be described in terms of the following stipulations:

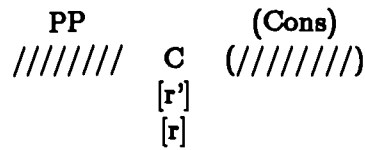
1. A referential centre consists of two intervals, viz. an asserted (r) and an assumed (r') reference time.
2. These intervals may be *atomic* or *extended*.
3. A referential centre may be *symmetrical* or *asymmetrical*. It is symmetrical if r and r' coincide ($r = r'$). It is asymmetrical if r is included in r' ($r \subseteq r'$).
4. If the asserted reference time of a RC is atomic it may either be a culmination (or change of state) or a point. If it is a culmination, the proposition evokes a contingency structure and has consequences associated with it. If it is a point, it doesn't have consequences associated with it.
5. If the asserted reference time of a RC is extended it may be *bounded* or *non-bounded*. If it is bounded it includes reference to a culmination (i.e. an atomic subinterval which coincides with its final boundary). This means it evokes a contingency structure and has consequences associated with it.

In the light of these criteria, the typology we rely on looks like this:

	Symmetrical RC		Asymmetrical RC
	RC atomic	RC extended	
+Cont	Culminations	Culminated Processes	Contingent States
-Cont	Points	Processes	(Non-contingent) States

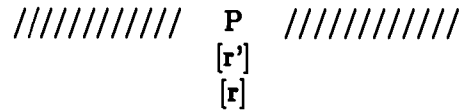
The six types we distinguish between can be represented schematically as follows:²

i. RC is symmetrical, *r* and *r'* are atomic and *r* is a culmination. The proposition evokes a contingency structure.



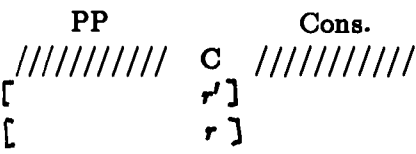
Example: The train arrived.
Type: culmination.

ii. RC is symmetrical; *r* and *r'* are atomic, but *r* is not a culmination. The proposition does not evoke a contingency structure.



Example: He hiccoughed.
Type: point.

iii. RC is symmetrical; *r* and *r'* are extended and *r* includes reference to a culmination. The proposition evokes a contingency structure.



²To represent the aspectual properties of each of the categories we use square brackets to indicate a bounded interval, angle brackets to indicate an unbounded interval. *P* stands for a non-consequential atomic interval (or point); *C* stands for a culmination.

Example: He wrote a letter.

Type: culminated process.

iv. RC is symmetrical; r and r' are extended but r does not include reference to a culmination.

The proposition does not evoke a contingency structure.

$$\begin{array}{ccc} < & // & > \\ < & & r' & > \\ < & & r & > \end{array}$$

Example: He walked slowly.

Type: process.

v. RC is asymmetrical; r is atomic, r' is extended, r is a culmination. The proposition evokes

a contingency structure.

$$\begin{array}{ccc} < & // & r' & // & > \\ & [C] & & & \\ & [r] & & & \end{array}$$

Example: (We turned the corner and) the village was out of sight.

Type: Contingent states.

vi. RC is asymmetrical; r is atomic, r' extended, and r is not a culmination. The proposition

does not evoke a contingency structure.

$$\begin{array}{ccc} < & // & r' & // & > \\ & [P] & & & \\ & [r] & & & \end{array}$$

Example: He was tired.

Type: non-contingent states, also referred to simply as states.

One of the advantages of our approach is that it captures the difference between processes (or, in Vendler's terminology, activities) and states without having to resort to real world criteria. In Vendler's characterisation, the difference between the two categories is specified in terms of the fact that activities involve dynamics, while states don't. This criterion, however, becomes problematical if one considers, for example, that (3-6b) is a state, while (3-6a) is an activity, although both situations clearly involve some kind of dynamics in real world terms:

- (3-6) a Alfred walked slowly.
 b Alfred was walking slowly

Apart from this, our main concern—as already pointed out—is not with an ontological classification of situation types. At the heart of our account lies the idea that the same situation may be thought of, or described, in different ways depending on the aspectual operators a proposition combines with and the context it occurs in. Our central goal is to specify the relationship between the aspectual properties of clauses and the way the reader incorporates them into a model of the discourse in which they occur.

In our approach, states resemble processes in that their assumed reference time is an extended non-bounded interval, and that they do not evoke a contingency structure. They differ from them in that the asserted reference time of states is an atomic interval (so that their referential centre is asymmetrical) while that of processes is an extended non-bounded interval (so that their referential centre is symmetrical). The repercussions of these referential properties for the temporal and perspectival interpretation of processes and states will become clear later in this chapter.

3.3 Comments

In the existing literature on aspect, the opposition between situations that include reference to a culmination and those that do not is often referred to as that between telic (or bounded) and atelic (or unbounded) situations. Telic situations are characterised by the fact that they reach a particular and well-defined endpoint, at which a change of state takes place. We refer to this endpoint as a culmination. All culminations by definition carry intimations of consequences. Atelic situations, on the other hand, do not include reference to a change of state or culmination, and have no consequences associated with them.

Quirk *e.a.* (1985: 201) refer to *points* as non-conclusive, punctual events. Earlier proposals in Miller and Johnson-Laird (1976) and Steedman (1977) incorporate a similar notion. Our use of the term *points* to label the category of atomic situations which do not evoke a contingency structure follows Moens (1987). Basic point propositions are very rare, but the category constitutes an important node for a number of transition paths. This will become

more clear later.

The category of *contingent states* differs from the other categories in two respects. First of all, contingent states occur only as contextualised propositions; in other words, only context can coerce a proposition into a contingent state. And second, although the referential centre of contingent states is asymmetrical their assumed reference time normally does not extend before their asserted reference time (or if it does it does so only marginally). All this will be discussed in detail shortly.

Vendler characterises achievements (in our terminology: culminations) as *punctual*. As was shown in the previous chapter, however, this term has some misleading connotations: culminations are not necessarily characterised by the fact that they have no temporal extension at all in “real life” terms; rather, they are *conceived of* as not having any internal structure. We feel the choice of the term *atomic* more accurately reflects this. Moreover, the term *culmination* captures that culminations constitute a change of state on an associated contingency structure, and, hence, that they carry intimations of a preparatory period and consequences.

Accomplishments (or culminated processes) are described by Vendler as resembling activities (or processes) in that they have successive phases, but as differing from them in that they are heterogeneous rather than homogeneous. What such a characterisation fails to capture is that accomplishments are “heterogeneous” in that they are really composite situations consisting of an activity associated with a particular output or endpoint (cf. Dowty 1979), after which a change of state will ensue. The choice of the term *culminated process* makes clear the relationship between the referent of this situation type (consisting of a preparatory process and the culmination this leads up to) and the contingency structure it evokes. Opting for the term *processes* instead of activities enables us to reflect the fact that it is easy to conceive of a process as part of a culminated process (viz. the period leading up to its culmination) which, if assigned an endpoint, adopts the behaviour of a culminated process.

Finally, it is perhaps worth drawing attention to the fact that Vendler’s use of the term *process* differs from ours. Vendler’s notion of process corresponds to what we refer to as propositions—in other words, he uses it as an umbrella term to refer to situation types in general. In our terminology processes are roughly equivalent to Vendler’s activities.

We will now turn our attention to the way in which the different aspectual types we have characterised here are contextualised in narrative.

3.4 Aspect and temporal ordering

3.4.1 Narration vs description

Although a number of different relationships may hold between consecutive main clauses in temporally unmodified narrative, two of these have a high degree of plausibility. The first is *forward movement in time*. This temporal relation applies if the ordering of the sentences on the page is felt by the reader to mimic temporal progression within the realm of the text. Sequences of sentences which create the impression of temporal movement will be said to *narrate*—they constitute *narration*. As was already pointed out earlier, the presentation of situations in a particular temporal order is quintessential to the narrative genre.

The second temporal relation is *simultaneity*, which includes *overlap*. Obviously strict temporal linearity can only be maintained as long as abstraction is made of other dimensions of the fictional world, such as its descriptive complexity. Consecutive clauses or sentences, therefore, may also be interpreted by the reader as reflecting that states of affairs apply simultaneously, so that the “horizontal” unfolding of action or development is temporarily suspended in favour of a descriptive “vertical” focus. Sentences which do not update the narrative will be called *description*. Narration is, in the existing literature, often referred to as the “foreground” of a narrative, while description is often felt to constitute its “background” (e.g. Hopper 1977).

Seen in this light reading a narrative involves a continuous process of extending and suspending time lines. This is illustrated by the following passage, in which bracketed sentences suspend the unfolding of narrative time while unbracketed sentences update the narrative:³

³Clearly, descriptive information can also be furnished by elements which modify noun phrases or verbal predicates (such as, in this particular example, *fammed open against some bold geraniums, stooping a little, staring straight ahead, walking swiftly, that wound behind the town like a great rope looping the villas together, driving towards the Excelsior*). Although an analysis of such constituents could be incorporated in the type of approach we propose (it could be argued that they all constitute embedded states), we will restrict our discussion to the aspectual information conveyed by non-embedded clauses which may change the aspectual type, and therefore the temporal interpretation, of the proposition concerned.

- (3-7) (The gates of the Pension Villa Excelsior were open wide, jammed open against some bold geraniums.) Stooping a little, staring straight ahead, walking swiftly, he passed through them and began climbing the hill that wound behind the town like a great lope looping the villas together. (The dust lay thick.) A carriage came bowling along driving towards the Excelsior. (In it sat the General and the Countess; they had been for his daily airing.) Mr Salesby stepped to one side. (Mansfield, *The Man Without A Temperament*: 13)

While the distinction between narration and description is commonly referred to in the existing literature (cf. Barthes 1966, Lukacs 1970), it has never received a clear linguistic definition. As we pointed out earlier, two types of information appear to determine whether or not a new main clause introduces a temporal update on the time line constructed by the reader—namely its aspectual type, and the way the semantic content of the sentence coheres with the discourse which surrounds it. We therefore need to determine the impact of both, and the relationship between the two.

3.4.2 Contingency

Due to the genre conventions associated with narrative, the reader's attention in the processing of a narrative will be geared towards detecting *consequentiality* relations between the states of affairs described. The notion of consequentiality embraces two relationships: a non-temporal one (contingency), and a temporal one (temporal ordering, most standardly temporal progression). A state of affairs s_2 is contingently related to another state of affairs s_1 if s_2 can be causally related to s_1 , or if s_1 is felt to enable, or create the appropriate conditions for, s_2 . Contingency relations, in other words, may be weak or strong.

Our central hypothesis is that the temporal ordering of consecutive sentences in narrative depends, inth last instance, on whether or not the reader can perceive a contingency relation between them. If semantic content and world knowledge make it possible to infer a contingency relation between two states of affairs s_1 and s_2 , this relationship will be made salient and the reader will order the two states of affairs accordingly. This means, in the majority of cases, that *consequences* will be associated with s_1 , (which therefore has to include reference to a culmination) and that s_2 will be placed in these consequences. As a result of this s_2 will

introduce a temporal update into the narrative.⁴

The following constitute examples of sequences of clauses which are not only sequentially but also contingently related:

- (3-8) She collected the cards and began to deal them into their proper packs. (Waugh, *A Handful of Dust*: 113)
- (3-9) He [...] shook the bottle, poured her out a dose and brought it across. (Mansfield, *The Man Without A Temperament*: 15)
- (3-10) They took her out [of the bath] and dried her. (White, *The House of Clouds*: 59)
- (3-11) The nurses caught her and dragged her along the passage. (White, *The House of Clouds*: 58)
- (3-12) Amelie took her shoes off, tied them together and hung them around her neck. (Rhys, *Wide Sargasso Sea*: 58)

For obvious reasons, sentences in dialogues are dominated by a relation of contingency:

- (3-13) "Ah, Lapinova," Rosalind murmured. "Is that what she's called?" said Ernest—"the real Rosalind?" (Woolf, *Lappin And Lapinova*: 22)
- (3-14) "Like a beer," he says, "or are you a vegetarian?" "As a matter of fact I am," she says. (Atwood, *Uglypuss*: 97)

In all these instances the contingency link between the two consecutive states of affairs is unambiguous: the change of state brought about by the first situation creates the appropriate conditions for the second one, and interpreting in any kind of order other than sequentially would sound strange, perplexing or nonsensical.

In other cases, world knowledge might make it felicitous the states of affairs described by two consecutive clauses to be interpreted as occurring in a temporal sequence different the order of the clauses on the page. In such instances, too, however, there will be a strong inclination on the part of the reader to interpret the second clause as being enabled by the first, and therefore to assume that the order of the sentences on the page mimics temporal progression. Consider, for example, the difference between the (a) and the (b) sequence in (3-15):

⁴There are some exceptions to this. These will be discussed in section 3.4.5 below.

- (3-15) a She screamed, and nurses, dozens of them, crowded round the bath to laugh at her. (White, *The House of Clouds*: 59)
- b Nurses, dozens of them, crowded round the bath to laugh at her, and she screamed.

While both passages are equally acceptable, there is a distinct difference in the interpretation they elicit. In (3-15a), the nurses' laughter will normally be inferred to be a reaction to the woman's screaming, and thus to follow it in time; while in (b), the reader will instinctively assume that the woman's screaming constitutes a response to the laughter, and is to be interpreted as coming after it.

3.4.3 Topical coherence

If no contingency relation can be detected between two states of affairs s_1 and s_2 , no consequences will be associated with s_1 , which therefore cannot be conceived of as including reference to a culmination. Because of this s_2 is interpreted at the same asserted reference time as s_1 , and therefore will not update the narrative. Moreover, the reader's focus of attention will shift towards the establishment of another (i.e. non-contingent) relationship between s_2 and s_1 . The clauses in the following passage²⁵ all describes states of affairs that cannot be contingently related to each other:

- (3-16) It [i.e. the buck] was coming down the ridge, as if it were walking out of the very sound of the horn which related its death. It was not running, it was walking, tremendous, unhurried, slanting and tilting its head to pass the antler through the undergrowth. (Faulkner, *Go Down Moses*: 183)
- (3-17) In the marvellous Framleigh morning Jason and Kevin are on the terrace. The early mist is again curling up from the prospect and the trees and a shaft of sunlight has isolated the temple so that it rides the landscape like a vision. No one else is about; the windows of the house are curtained still and within people are either numbly sleeping or waking to headaches, shaggy tongues and mental unease. (Lively, *Next to Nature, Art*: 185).
- (3-18) The coat collar pressed rough against her neck and her cheeks were softly cold as if they had been washed in icewater. She breathed gently with the air; on the left a strip of veld fire curled silently, flameless. Overhead a dove purred. (Gordimer, *Is There Nowhere Else Where We Can Meet?*: 17)

- (3-19) The delicious breath of rain was in the air. In the street below a peddler was crying his wares. The notes of a distant song which some one was singing reached her faintly, and countless sparrows were twittering in the eaves. (Chopin, *The Story of an Hour*: 82)

We characterise the relationship made salient between these sequences of sentences as *topical*. This term is deliberately vague: “topics” which may serve as dominant focus of coherence include any type of image, impression (sensory or mental), or contemplation of the fictional world.

Although we claim that the temporal relationship between the sentences in the passages above is determined by (essentially non-temporal) kinds of coherence the reader perceives between their semantic content, it is, of course, not accidental that all of the sentences in examples (3-8) to (3-15) exhibit culminated process or culmination types, while those in examples (3-16) to (3-19) are all processes or states. We will now examine the relationship between sentence aspect and discourse coherence in more detail.

3.4.4 Ordering temporally unmodified main clauses in narrative

General principles.

Our argument crucially differentiates between the aspectual type of decontextualised propositions, and that of contextualised propositions. The type of decontextualised propositions is, as we have seen earlier, determined either by the lexical- semantic properties of their basic proposition (if the sentence contains no aspectual operators), or by the interaction of aspectual operators with the basic proposition (in which case the basic proposition is coerced). In the case of contextualised propositions the type of the decontextualised proposition may be further coerced by context.

With respect to decontextualised propositions, we distinguish between contingent categories (which include reference to a culmination, and therefore evoke a contingency structure) and non-contingent categories. Because contingent states only occur as contextualised propositions, contingent decontextualised propositions are either culminations or culminated processes; we refer to these collectively as *events*, or, in shorthand, *E*s. Points, we have said

earlier, occur so rarely as decontextualised propositions that they are negligible. We will therefore limit our discussion of non-contingent decontextualised propositions to processes and states, collectively referred to as *PSs*.

Events are characterised by two features. First of all, they are to be interpreted at an asserted reference time which *differs* from that of the sentence which precedes them. This means that, in the absence of temporal adverbials, they are to be placed in the consequences of the contingency structure associated with a preceding proposition. And secondly, they make available a locus for a new asserted reference time for subsequent reference which does not coincide with their own asserted reference time but which has been *shifted*. This locus usually coincides with the consequences associated with the event. If one of these conditions is not met, either because of the requirements of the proposition which precedes or follows the event, or because of the coherence relations made salient by the text, context acts as coercive operator.

PSs, on the other hand, are to be interpreted at a *stable* asserted reference time, i.e. an asserted reference time which coincides with that of the sentence which precedes them. This means they cannot be placed in the consequences of a preceding proposition unless they are coerced. Processes and states also *stabilise* their own asserted reference time, which means they do not make available consequences which may serve as locus for subsequent reference, unless they are, again, coerced.

We will now discuss different types of temporal ordering more systematically. OE, in the heading of the following sections, denotes that a contingency relationship is made salient between the two aspectual types under discussion. NC, on the other hand, means that no contingency relationship can be detected. Thus *E + CE sequences* is shorthand for sequences of two events which are contingently related. *PS + NCE sequences* stands for sequences of a process or a state followed by an event which is not contingently related to it, etc.

E + CE sequences.

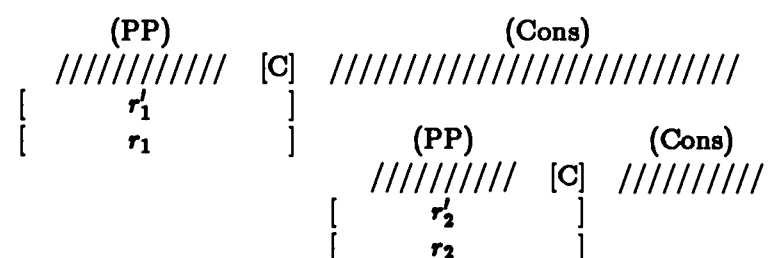
In the majority of cases sequences of two events trigger the impression of forward movement in time. This can be explained in the light of the principles just outlined. The first event

makes reference to a culmination and therefore makes available consequences for subsequent reference. The second event has to be interpreted at a shifted asserted reference time, which is available. If the semantic content of the clauses supports a contingency link between the two, no matter how weak, the second event will be placed in the consequences of the first and as a result updates the narrative.

The temporal movement exhibited by the sequence of culminated processes in (3-20), for example,

- (3-20) Mark put the envelope in his inside jacket pocket, and took a cab to the Foundation. (Oakley, *The Men's Room*: 133)

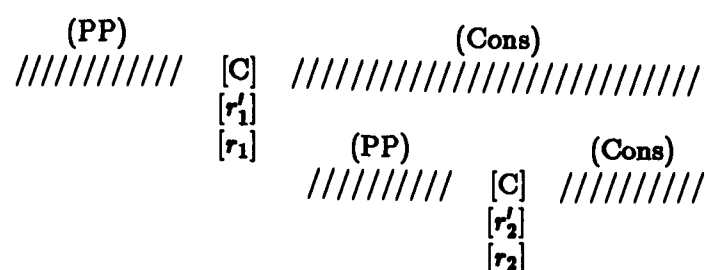
can be represented schematically as follows:



The same mechanism accounts for the impression of temporal movement created by the sequence in (3-21)

- (3-21) At the door of the booking office we collided with a rather exquisite young man, and I recognized Miss Marple's nephew just arriving. (Christie, *The Murder at the Vicarage*: 113)

Since the first clause in this example constitutes a culmination, its referential parameters are to be construed as two coinciding atomic intervals which are mapped onto the culmination of the contingency structure the state of affairs evokes. In addition to this the culmination has consequences associated with it, which can plausibly serve as antecedent context for the following culmination, which consequently updates the narrative. The following representation captures this:



E + NCE sequences.

The aspectual type of events, in our analysis, is characterised by the fact that their referential centre is symmetrical and that they evoke a meaning structure of contingently related states of affairs. If an event is followed by another event, the latter will normally activate this structure because it can be contingently related to it and hence be placed in its consequences. The type of coherence which most prominently governs the relationship between two consecutive events, however, may override this expectation: if no contingency relation can be inferred to hold between two events, a *topical* relation between them will be made salient. In such cases the reader has to adjust the aspectual nature of the decontextualised propositions in the light of the context in which they occur. This means abstraction has to be made of the contingency structure normally evoked by them: the events can no longer be perceived as bringing about a change of state, and are coerced into their non-contingent equivalent, so that they no longer evoke a contingency structure.

The following examples illustrate this:

- (3-22) Beyond the window a car starts up, an aeroplane passes overhead. (Lively, *Moon Tiger*: 207)
- (3-23) Greg, in the old gun-room that serves now as telephone room, makes two calls to London and one to Boston. Bob walks back from the village pub in the dark, a trifle unsteadily. (Lively, *Next to Nature, Art*: 17)

In such instances, events do not partake in an unfolding chain of action and development, but furnish descriptive details of what the fictional world looks like.

E + CPS sequences.

Process or state types may create the impression of forward movement in time if they are sequences with an event and if a contingency relation is made salient between their semantic content and that of the event description which precedes it. The following examples illustrate this:

- (3-24) (We mounted,) turned a corner, and the village was out of sight. (Rhys, *Wide Sargasso Sea*: 58)
- (3-25) (He came in and) switched on the light. There he stood tall, handsome, rubbing his hands that were red with cold. (Woolf, *Lappin and Lapinova*: 27)
- (3-26) (His leg is in her way—it thrashes, she thrusts, and a piece of cliff, of the solid world which evidently is not so solid after all, shifts under her clutching hands...) crumbles... and she is falling thwack backwards on her shoulders, her head, her outflung arm. (Lively, *Moon Tiger*: 4)
- (3-27) (At last the wire tore through its hold on the cloth;) wobbling, frantic, she climbed over the fence. And she was out. (Gordimer, *Is There Nowhere Else Where We Can Meet?*: 19)
- (3-28) The iron gate clanged open. Light dragging steps sounded across the hall, coming towards him. (Mansfield, *The Man Without A Temperament*: 7)
- (3-29) “Look here, would you like my watch?” And he dangled it before her. (Mansfield, *The Man Without A Temperament*: 13)

When processing sequences like the ones above, the reader constructs a contingency structure, which means consequences are made available which may serve as antecedent context for a subsequent contingently related state of affairs. The next clause is, on the basis of its compositionally derived meaning, identified as a state (examples (3-24) to (3-27)) or a process (examples (3-28) and (3-29)), and therefore normally has to be interpreted at a stable asserted reference time, which is not provided. But pragmatic inferences make salient a contingency relationship between the semantic content of the two clauses. Because of this the type of the second clause has to be coerced, so that it can be placed in the consequences of the first clause. This is achieved by associating a contingency structure with its asserted reference time. In the case of states this means that the asserted reference time is conceived of as a culmination. In the case of processes, the extended asserted reference time is assigned a culmination. Once

this is done, the clause can be placed into the consequences of the event which precedes it.

The reader's interpretation of verbs which are, in principle, ambiguous between a state and an event interpretation can be explained along the same lines: if a contingency relation can be detected between the aspectually ambiguous proposition and the state of affairs which precedes it the proposition^{can} be interpreted as an event. (3-30) illustrates this:

- (3-30) "Tessa, sit down. I'll make you some oatmeal." As if a hand were pressing down on her shoulder, she sat. (Oates, *Wild Saturday*: 102)

E + NCPS sequences.

In the following examples an event is followed by a process or a state which is not contingently related to it:

- (3-31) She glanced at him sideways. Well, when he was eating toast he looked like a rabbit. (Woolf, *Lappin and Lapinova*: 20)
- (3-32) Finally he comes inside. The moon—the room is painted white with moonlight. (Mansfield, *The Man Without A Temperament*: 18)
- (3-33) (She got up, waved,) and slowly she came to meet him, dragging the heavy cape. In her hand she carried a spray of heliotrope. (Mansfield, *The Man Without A Temperament*: 15)

Again, there is a conflict between the requirements of the two consecutive aspectual types: the event evokes a contingency structure and makes available a shifted asserted reference time for subsequent reference. But the following state or process type has to be interpreted at a stable asserted reference time. Because no contingency relationship can be inferred between the two states of affairs, however, it is, in this instance, the event which has to be coerced: the reader has, at least temporarily, to make abstraction of the contingency structure normally associated with it. In the case of the examples above, this means the culmination proposition is coerced into a point, so that it can serve as appropriate antecedent context for the next proposition; this involves stripping the described state of affairs of any envisaged consequences, so that its asserted reference time is stabilised.

If a culminated process is followed by a state or process description which is not contingently related to it, the culminated process is stripped of its culmination, and coerced into a process.

The following example illustrates this:

- (3-34) (Miss Henley came in time to put Francis to bed and then) she took us down to dinner. The Lord and Lady were waiting in the hall. (Boyle, *Natives Don't Cry*: 40)

The contingency structure evoked by the first event, however, remains present as an underlying layer of meaning which may be reactivated at a later stage. Thus in (3-35), the second event, which has to be interpreted at a shifted asserted reference time, can be placed into the consequences of the first one, which had been temporarily made abstraction of for the interpretation of the process:

- (3-35) [...] she came to meet him, dragging the heavy cape. In her hand she carried a spray of heliotrope. "You're late," she cried gayly. (Mansfield, *The Man Without A Temperament*: 15)

PS + NCPS sequences.

If a state or process is sequenced with another state or process, the second proposition will be interpreted as simultaneous or overlapping with the first unless a contingency relation between them is made salient. This is in line with the analysis we propose. Consider, first of all, the case of two consecutive states, as in (3-36):

- (3-36) They were a very dark young couple—black hair, olive skin, brilliant eyes and teeth. He was dressed "English fashion" in a flannel jacket, white trouser and shoes. (Mansfield, *The Man Without A Temperament*: 11)

When the reader encounters the first clause in this passage, she identifies it as a state and accordingly constructs an atomic asserted reference time—the point at which the appearance of the couple is described, observed or perceived (we will, for the sake of clarity, make abstraction for the moment of the fact that the clause is itself contextualised and that this atomic asserted reference time is provided by preceding discourse). The *actual* extension of the state, however, is not restricted to this particular point in time: clearly, the characterisation provided by the clause already applied before this time, and will continue to apply beyond it—without it being specified when it came about, or when it will cease to hold. The state's asserted reference time, in other words, is to be situated within an unbounded interval extending at both sides of it which constitutes its assumed reference time. Because

the asserted reference time of the state is not a culmination it is stabilised.

The next clause also constitutes a state. Because of this, it has to be interpreted at a stable asserted reference time, which is provided by the first clause. Its actual extension will, as in the case of the first clause, extend at both sides of this asserted reference time, so that it also overlaps with the assumed extension of the first clause. Because no contingency link is established between the two clauses, the reader directs her focus of attention towards establishing some kind of topical coherence between them. This is in line with the semantic content of the clauses.

The asserted reference time of *processes*, in the analysis we propose, does not include reference to a change of state or culmination; hence processes do not evoke a contingency structure. Because of this, processes, like states, are to be interpreted at a stable asserted reference time, and they do not make available consequences for subsequent reference, unless they are coerced by context. Processes differ from states, however, in that their referential centre is *symmetrical*, and their asserted reference time extended.

What this means is that while processes describe a non-bounded situation as extending over a period of time, they differ from states in that their asserted reference time is not an atomic interval at which this situation is assessed as in progress. Processes convey, rather, that the state of affairs they describe is to be conceived of as asserted at an unspecified time span which coincides with their assumed reference time. Such a representation captures the *overt* and *developing* nature of processes often referred to in the literature. But because their asserted reference time does not include reference to a culmination, consecutive processes are interpreted as simultaneous (unless a contingency relation is made salient between them): the first process provides the stabilised asserted reference time required for the interpretation of the second. The following examples illustrate this:

- (3-37) She trembled with strength as they struggled. The dust puffed round her shoes and his scuffling toes. (Gordimer, *Is There Nowhere Else We Can Meet*: 19)
- (3-38) Her pulses beat fast, and the coursing blood warmed and relaxed every inch of her body. (Chopin, *The Story Of An Hour*: 83)
- (3-39) We drank; we ate. (Munro: *Chaddaleys and Flemings*: 16)

(3-40) The sun blazed out and steam rose from the garden behind us. (Rhys, *Wide Sargasso Sea*: 58)

(3-41) Their laughing voices charged with excitement beat against the glassed-in veranda like birds and a strange, saltish smell came from the basket. (Mansfield, *The Man Without A Temperament*: 11)

Because the asserted reference time is protracted rather than atomic, however, the relationship between consecutive processes is less static than in the case of states: while processes do not rely for their interpretation on a shifted temporal locus and thus do not update the narrative, they do, because of the fact that their asserted reference time extends, convey a sense of temporal development which states lack.

If a process is sequenced with a state, and no contingency relationship is detected between the two, both are assessed at the same stable asserted reference time, along the lines just discussed, and will therefore be interpreted as simultaneous. The following examples illustrate this:

(3-42) [S] Over in the corner sat The Two Topknots, drinking a concoction they always drank at this hour—something whitish, greyish, in glasses, with little husks floating on the top—and rooting in a tin full of paper shavings for pieces of speckled biscuit, which they broke, dropped into the glassed and fished for with spoons. [P] Their two coils of knitting, like two snakes, slumbered beside the tray. (Mansfield, *The Man Without A Temperament*: 7)

(3-43) [P] Hand in hand the youthful lovers sauntered along the esplanade. [S] It was a night in midsummer; [S] a wispy moon had set, [S] and the stars glittered. [S] The dark mass of the sea, at flood, lay tranquil, slothfully slapping the shingle. (Richardson, *Two Hanged Women*: 49)

PS + CPS Sequences.

While consecutive states or processes are normally interpreted as simultaneous, they may create the impression that narrative time moves forward if a contingency relationship is made salient between them. The following examples illustrate this:

(3-44) She was nearer to him now [...]. She was level with him, passing him. (Gordimer, *Is There Nowhere Else Where We Can Meet?*: 19)

(3-45) [...] and she was actually under the Abbey walls, was springing, with Henry's assistance, from the carriage, was beneath the shelter of the old porch, and had even passed onto the hall, where her friend and the General were waiting to welcome her [...]. (Austen, *Northanger Abbey*: 167)

(3-46) The taxi was close to her now, its door was open, she was getting in. (Wharton, *Atrophy*: 38)

(3-47) She went and stood at the window with a greatly disturbed look on her face. (Chopin, *The Storm*: 3)

The mechanism which allows us to account for such sequences is completely in line with our earlier analysis. When the reader encounters the first state or process clause she will, on the basis of its compositionally derived meaning, identify it as a non-contingent type (we will, for the sake of clarity, not take into account discourse which precedes it and which might obviously also affect its aspectual interpretation). She will accordingly construct a referential centre the asserted reference time of which is not a culmination, and which hence does not make available consequences for subsequent reference.

The second clause is again identified as a process or a state. If it could be topically related to the first clause it would be interpreted at the same reference time, which is stable. Semantic content and world knowledge, however, make salient a contingency relation between the two clauses. This means that the reader, first of all, has to retrospectively adapt her aspectual interpretation of the first clause, by making it contingent. This is achieved either by thinking of its asserted reference time as a culmination (if the proposition is a state) or by assigning a culmination to it (if the proposition is a process). And second, the aspectual type of the second clause has to be adjusted, so that its asserted reference time can be placed in the consequences of the first clause. This means the second clause, too, is to be made contingent.

PS + NCE sequences.

If a process or state is followed by an event which cannot be contingently related to it, the antecedent requirements of the event (which is to be interpreted at a non-stable asserted reference time) are in conflict with the antecedent context provided by the state or process. In such cases, however, the event will often re-activate a contingency structure associated with an event earlier in the narrative which was temporarily made abstraction of to create

the appropriate antecedent context for a subsequent state or process. The following examples illustrate this:

- (3-48) [C1] Helen woke up and screamed. [C2] (Another nurse was sitting by the green lamp.) [C3] "You must be quiet, dear," said the nurse. (White, *The House of Clouds*: 56)
- (3-49) [C1] A carriage came bowling along driving towards the Excelsior. [C2] (In it sat the General and the Countess; they had been for his daily airing.) [C3] Mr Salesby stepped to one side. (Mansfield, *The Man Without A Temperament*: 13)

In each of these examples the third clause [C3] is placed in the consequences of the contingency structure evoked by the first clause [C1], which were temporarily made abstraction of to process the second clause [C2].

PS + CE sequences.

In some instances, finally, a state or process may be followed by an event which is contingently related to it. In terms of our analysis, this means that the state or process has to be coerced into a contingent type so that it meets the requirements of the following event. In the case of a state, this is achieved by conceiving of its asserted reference time as a culmination, so that consequences can be associated with it:

- (3-50) When they reached the lift she was coughing. He frowned. (Mansfield, *The Man without A Temperament*: 15)

In the case of a process, a culmination is to be assigned to the extended asserted reference time of the process:

- (3-51) [...] the pie flew and caught him on the side of the face just as in the old movies or an I Love Lucy show. (Munro, *Chaddleys and Flemings*: 18)
- (3-52) Light dragging steps sounded across the hall, coming towards him. A hand, like a leaf, fell on his shoulder. (Mansfield, *The Man Without A Temperament*: 7)

3.4.5 Contingently related events: precedence and inclusion

So far, we have limited our discussion to sequences of (temporally unmarked) main clauses which are either interpreted as simultaneous or overlapping, or as propelling time. Other temporal relations may hold between successive events, however, namely *inclusion* or *precedence*. In this section we will show how these types of temporal ordering, too, can be accounted for in the analysis we propose.

Inclusion

Consider, first of all, the following examples:

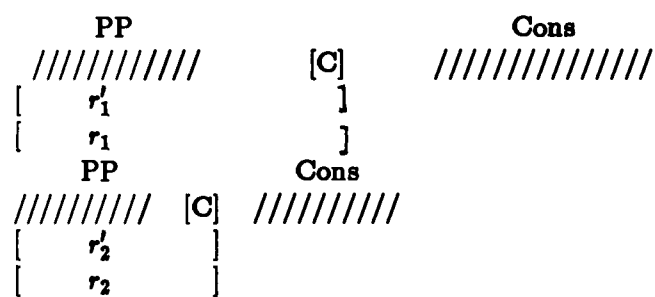
- (3-53) Dr Messinger went down to the river's edge [...]; he brought with him a rifle, a drinking cup and a day's provisions. (Waugh, *A Handful of Dust*: 196)
- (3-54) In the morning, father and mother took us part way up a mountain. [...] We left very early, while it was dark still. (Boyle, *Natives Don't Cry*: 46)
- (3-55) Father went to the post office the first thing in Salzburg. He took the passports in his hand. (Boyle, *Natives Don't Cry*: 42)

Although in each of these passages one event (which has the aspectual type of a culminated process) is followed by another one, the second event does not introduce a temporal update, but is interpreted as constituting part of the first event. Clearly, the reader's standard expectations about the sequential and consequential relations which hold between consecutive events is overridden here by a stronger inference: world knowledge makes it more plausible to make salient another connection between the two events.

The contingency structure introduced earlier allows us to represent this connection. Unless it is coerced, a culminated process proposition can be represented in terms of a referential centre consisting of two symmetrical bounded intervals, which can be mapped onto the preparatory process and culmination of the contingency structure they evoke. Because of this a culminated process makes available consequences, which are normally singled out for reference by a subsequent proposition which is contingently related to it. But aside from its consequences, a culminated process proposition also makes available for reference the *preparatory process*

which forms part of the contingency structure it evokes. And in the passages above the second event is most naturally interpreted as forming part of the preparatory period (which does not include the culmination) of the proposition which precedes it.

This can be represented schematically as follows:



Precedence

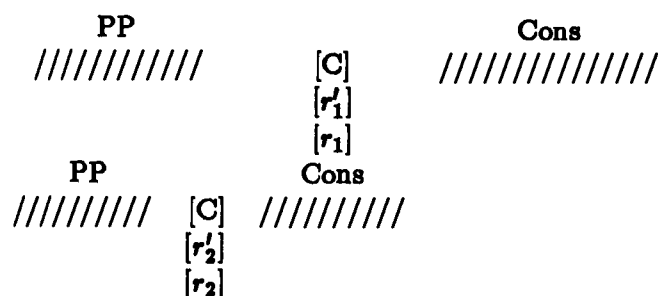
Apart from temporal progression and precedence, a third type of ordering may hold between successive events, namely precedence. Such a relationship may be inferred by the reader if a culmination expression is followed by an event which is most plausibly interpreted as being situated in the preparatory process leading up to this culmination.

As we have seen a culmination carries intimations of the preparatory period of the contingency structure it evokes, and its consequences. Both can be made salient as antecedent locus for subsequent reference. If a new event proposition is most plausibly interpreted as being placed in the preparatory period of a preceding culmination, the reader will infer a relationship of precedence between them.

The sequence in (3-56) illustrates this.

(3-56) John fell. He slipped on a banana skin.

It can be represented schematically as follows:



Relations of temporal precedence among consecutive events in narrative however, are extremely rare: while it is possible to construct sequences such as the above, we haven't encountered any in the actual narratives we analyzed for the purpose of this dissertation. The reason for this seems to lie in a combination of Gricean principles and conventions associated with narrative.

As we pointed out earlier, one of the conventions which govern our concept of narrative is that the reader expects that the ordering of events the page will mimic temporal progression on the narrative line she constructs when processing the narrative. Because of this there seems to be a natural reluctance on the part of the reader to assign a different temporal order to sequences of temporally unmodified events.

The reader's efforts to place a new event in the consequences of the one which precedes it may be overridden, however, if another contingency link between the two events is so strong that it does not allow any other plausible interpretation—for instance, if there is a very prominent and virtually unambiguous causality connection between the two, as in (3-56). To express such a connection, however, the language user has other means at her disposal which are not in conflict with standard conventions of narratives: if the order of the two events in (3-56) were reversed, the reader would automatically try to detect a consequentiality relation between them which, in the case of (3-56), would be felt to be quite strong. If the writer wanted to emphasise this relationship she could do so through the introduction of a subclause which specifies it.

As a result of this an interpretation of the temporal ordering of the two clauses in (3-56) would require fewer inferences on the part of the reader if they were ordered as follows:

- (3-57) a John slipped over a banana skin and fell.
 b John fell because he slipped over a banana skin.

As our ability to assign an appropriate causal/temporal interpretation to (3-56) illustrates, however, the reader will apparently be prepared to make the additional inferences required for a felicitous interpretation of the sequence if the causal link between the two events is sufficiently strong to justify it. If no such strong contingency relation can be inferred, however, a sequence which can only be interpreted felicitously if time is interpreted as moving backwards will be felt to be unacceptable. Example (3-58) illustrates this:

- (3-58) *John brushed his teeth. He got up.

The preparatory period of culminated processes, in contrast, serves more frequently as antecedent locus for a subsequent contingently related proposition. There are two reasons for this. First of all, since the preparatory period which serves as antecedent for subsequent reference is already referred to by the culminated process expression no backward shift is necessary: instead, the temporal interpretation of the new clause merely involves a further specification the structure of an already established referential centre. This seems to require fewer inferences on the part of the reader. In addition to this the temporal meaning conveyed through singling out the preparatory period of a previous proposition as antecedent for a new one cannot be expressed in another way which is more in line with narrative conventions: if the order of the two clauses were reversed this would clearly result in a different temporal interpretation. Moreover, there are no obvious other means by which the same meaning (the fact that one event forms part of the time span denoted by another one) can be expressed.

Conclusion

In rare cases, a relationship other than temporal sequencing may hold between consecutive events—namely inclusion or prec^{de}ence. We have shown in this section that these types of temporal ordering, too, can be explained in the light of the account we propose. In the majority of cases, however, a new event in a narrative will introduce a temporal update. In the rest of this dissertation we will, for the sake of clarity, assume that the locus for the asserted reference time of an event in temporally unmarked narrative is provided by the consequences associated with a preceding event.

3.4.6 Conclusion

Our discussion of the temporal interpretation of different aspectual types of clauses in a narrative was based on a distinction between contingent types (events) and non-contingent types (processes and states). If contingent types are sequenced they create the impression of a forward movement of time; this was explained in the light of the fact that they have a contingency structure associated with them. Consecutive non-contingent types, on the other hand, are normally interpreted as simultaneous or overlapping. This was attributed to the fact that they do not include reference to a culmination, and therefore do not make available consequences for subsequent reference. In addition to this, however, non-contingent types may be interpreted as contingent, and contingent types may be interpreted as non-contingent, depending on the relationship that is made salient between the clause and its context. For example, if a clause exhibiting a non-contingent type is sequenced with one exhibiting a contingent one, the aspectual type of one of them has to be coerced to meet the contextualisation requirements of the other. Moreover, the coherence relation that is most salient between the semantic content of consecutive clauses of affairs may also affect their aspectual interpretation. Thus two consecutive propositions which, if decontextualised, exhibit a contingent type may be contextualised as non-contingent if no contingency relationship can be detected between them, while two consecutive propositions which, if decontextualised, exhibit a non-contingent type may be contextualised as contingent if a contingency relationship is made salient between them.

Clauses or sentences which *narrate*, it follows from our discussion, exhibit a contingent type, and fall into two types. *Events* are defined as propositions with a symmetrical referential centre which are contingently related to a preceding proposition; they include processes and points which are thought of as contingent because of the context in which they occur. And *contingent states* are defined as propositions with an asymmetrical referential centre the asserted reference time of which is contingently related to the proposition which precedes them. Contingent states have always been coerced by the context in which they occur. Events and contingent states introduce a temporal update into a narrative.

Along the same lines, we can distinguish between two types of propositions which *describe*. Such propositions exhibit a non-contingent type. *Points* and *processes* are propositions with

a symmetrical referential centre which cannot be contingently related to a preceding proposition; they include culminations and culminated processes which are thought of as non-contingent because of the context in which they occur. And *states* (by which we always mean non-contingent states) are propositions with an asymmetrical referential centre which are not contingently related to the proposition which precedes them. Points, processes and states do not update a narrative.

3.5 Aspect and perspective

3.5.1 Perspectively non-situated vs perspectively situated main clauses

In Chapter 1 we briefly introduced a distinction between perspectively situated and perspectively non-situated sentences. If a reader encounters a perspectively situated sentence, she will assume the described state of affairs is perceived or contemplated from a particular viewpoint, and she will accordingly construct a position within the fictional reality from which the described state of affairs is looked at, heard or assessed. We refer to such a position as a *perspectival focus*. If a reader encounters a perspectively non-situated sentence, on the other hand, the question as to the viewpoint from which the state of affairs is described normally simply does not arise and no perspectival focus is construed.

Perspectival information is typically conveyed by what we have referred to as *subject-oriented elements*. But, as we observed in Chapter 1, a sentence may be perspectively situated even if it does not contain any such feature. This is especially clear if its semantic content is not in accordance with the “reality” of the fiction, and therefore has to be interpreted as distorted by the unreliable judgement of a subject. In the following passage, for example, the male protagonist thinks he sees his daughter, who has been kidnapped two years earlier:

- (3-59) (1) The first girl was closest to him. (2) The thick fringe bobbed against her white forehead, (3) her chin was raised, (4) she had a dreamy appearance. (5) He was looking at his daughter. (McEwan, *The Child in Time*: 142)

The fifth clause in this example does not describe the fictional world “objectively” (the girl turns out not to be his daughter), but portrays what is the man’s imaginative—and

mistaken—perception of it.

A similar observation applies to (3-60):

- (3-60) (1) He stopped (2) and rose again, (3) and seemed quite embarrassed. (4)
He was more in love with her than Emma had supposed. (Austen, *Emma*:
261)

Readers familiar with Jane Austen's *Emma* will know that the content of the fourth clause in this passage is pure speculation on Emma's part: the referent of the third person pronoun (Mr Elton) is not in love with Emma, but sentimentally involved with another character. In other instances, the semantic content of a sentence or tensed clause can be interpreted as refracted from a subject's point of view, even if there is at the same time no reason to question the narrative veridicality of the state of affairs. Thus in example (3-61) the third clause can be inferred to describe the "reality" of the fiction, but is at the same time suggestive of the female protagonist's subjective experience of it:

- (3-61) (1) She raised her hand [...] (2) and smoothed her hair; (3) it was wet at
the hairline. (Gordimer, *Is There Nowhere Else Where We Can Meet*: 20)

Finally, sentences or tensed clauses in narrative may not be interpreted as reflecting the viewpoint of a specific individual, yet remain suggestive of the presence of an experiencing observer. This is illustrated by example (3-62), which constitutes the opening sentence of the short story concerned:

- (3-62) It was a cool grey morning and the air was like smoke. (Gordimer, *Is
There Nowhere Else Where We Can Meet*?: 17)

All the tensed clauses we have just discussed are, in some way or other, perspectively situated—yet none of them contain any subject-oriented features. What they do have in common, however, is that none of them creates the impression of forward movement in time. On the basis of this, we could advance the following hypothesis: sentences or tensed clauses in narrative are perspectively situated if they do not introduce a temporal update into the narrative. According to this hypothesis states, processes and points (and events which are thought of as processes or points) are perspectively situated. In the following section we will try to establish if this hypothesis is correct.

3.5.2 Perspective and context

Perspectivally situated sentences, as we have seen, are characterised by the fact that they introduce a perspectival focus. Upon encountering a perspectivally situated sentence, the reader gets the impression that the described state of affairs constitutes the object of someone's perception or thought.

If a perspectival focus is occupied by the text's narrator, perspective is *presented directly*. In this case the perspectival focus is situated in the referential context of the speech act, which may or may not coincide with the referential context of the story. If the reader infers that a perspectival focus is occupied by a subject in the text different from the text's narrator, perspective is *represented*, and the perspectival focus is situated in the referential context of the story, which does not coincide with the context of the narrator's speech act. We will for the time being, ignore the case of directly presented perspective, and concentrate on sentences which represent perspective.

If a sentence represents perspective, its asserted reference time has to be interpreted as the time at which the described situation, which constitutes the object of a subject's perception or thought, is assessed by the subject. We will refer to such to this type of temporal interval as a *perspectival interval*.

A ^{perspectival}perspectival is often introduced in the referential context of a story by a clause or sentence containing a verb of speech, perception or cognition, which we will refer to as a *perspectival sentence*. The perspectival function of perspectival sentences will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 6. The following examples, however, should suffice to illustrate the point we are trying to make—namely that if a perspectivally situated sentence comes after a perspectival sentence, the reader will be inclined to identify the semantic subject of the perspectival sentence as the subject-of-consciousness of the perspectivally situated sentence which follows it:

(3-63) (He hears her stirring). Does she want something? (Mansfield, *The Man Without A Temperament*: 18)

(3-64) (Charles stared at her). This was his daughter, speaking to him. His daughter. (Oates, *Wild Saturday*: 138)

(3-65) (He laughed and shook his head): He *knew*... Good Lord, *exactly* like -
(Gordimer, *The Soft Voice of the Serpent*: 24)

In the light of this, we propose the following test to determine the perspectival status of different aspectual types: a proposition is perspectivally situated if, when sequenced with a perspectival sentence, it can be interpreted as reflecting the thoughts or perceptions of the semantic subject of the latter.

According to this test, *states* are perspectivally situated, as the following examples illustrate:⁵

- (3-66) a John looked out of the window. The children were outside.
b John looked out of the window. The children were playing outside.
c John looked out of the window. The children had built a sandcastle.
d John wondered where the children were. They always played outside.

In all of these examples the second sentence, which is a state, can be interpreted as describing a state of affairs as it is being perceived by the semantic subject of the perspectival sentence which precedes it.

Events, in contrast, sound awkward if they occur in such a sequence, unless a contingency relationship can be inferred between the event and the perspectival sentence. In the following examples, where no contingency relation can be established between the two sentences, the sequence sounds odd:

- (3-67) a John looked out of the window. The children arrived.
b John looked out of the window. The children built a sandcastle.

If a contingency relation *can* be inferred between the two sentence, the sequence no longer sounds awkward, but both sentences will be interpreted as perspectivally non-situated. The second sentence introduces a temporal update so that its asserted reference time does not coincide with the asserted reference time of the perspectival sentence. As a result the described state of affairs will no longer be interpreted as being perceived by the subject of the first clause.

The following examples illustrate this:

⁵In our approach progressives, perfects and habituais are said to constitute states. In Chapter 4 we will give backbone to this claim through a detailed analysis of their aspectual properties.

- (3-68) a John looked at Jeanie. She got up (and said it was time for them to leave.)
 b John looked at Jeanie. She scribbled something on a piece of paper (and pushed it towards him.)

All this is in line with our starting hypothesis, which stipulates that for a sentence to be perspectivally situated it has to be interpreted at a *stable* asserted reference time. However, processes, which *are* interpreted at a stable asserted reference time, also sound odd if they are sequenced with a perspectival sentence. Example (3-69) illustrates this:

- (3-69) John looked out of the window. The children played outside.

This awkwardness disappears if the process combines with a progressive auxiliary, as in (3-70):

- (3-70) John looked out of the window. The children were playing outside.

The fact that the asserted reference time of a sentence is stable (so that it does not update the narrative) therefore does not appear to be a sufficient condition for the sentence to be perspectivally situated.

In the analysis we propose, processes differ from states in that the asserted reference time of the former is atomic, while that of the latter is extended. Thus, the only respect in which the second clause in example (3-69) (“the children played outside”) differs from the second clause in example (3-70) (“the children were playing outside”) is that the same state of affairs is, in example (3-69), asserted at an extended interval, while in example (3-70) it is asserted at an atomic interval. In other words, if the extended non-bounded interval which constitutes the assumed reference time of a process is asserted at an atomic interval, the proposition becomes perspectivally situated.

It follows from this that, for a proposition to be perspectivally situated, its asserted reference time not only has to be stable, but also *atomic*. In Chapter 5, we will argue that the connection between the atomicity of an asserted reference time and the marking of a perspective is most clear in present tense discourse with actual time reference, where the asserted reference time of an utterance coincides with its speech time, and *has* to be atomic. The narrative analogue of such a speech time—a perspectival focus—is, accordingly, introduced only by sentences

the asserted reference time of which is (conceived of as) atomic.

It follows from this that the sequence in (3-71) is counterintuitive for two reasons:

(3-71) ? John looked out of the window. The children built a sandcastle.

Because no contingency relation can be inferred between the two sentences, the second sentence cannot be interpreted as a culminated process which is placed in the consequences of the first. And because the asserted reference time of the second sentence is extended, it cannot be interpreted at the (stabilised) asserted reference time of the perspectival sentence unless its asserted reference time is made atomic—which means its aspectual type is turned into that of a state. In Chapter 4 we will describe in more detail what happens to the aspectual profile of a non-stative proposition which is turned into a state (for example, by combining it with a progressive auxiliary).

If a culmination is sequenced with a perspectival sentence, as in (3-72)

(3-72) John looked out of the window. The children arrived.

the sequence will sound awkward, but more acceptable than example (3-71.) This is due to the fact that the asserted reference time of ^{the} second sentence, which is a culmination is atomic, so that it can, in principle, be interpreted at the stable asserted reference time of the perspectival sentence. This would mean that both propositions are thought of as non-contingent, or as points.

Nevertheless, if the language user wants to express that a culmination proposition describes a state of affairs as the object of someone's perception, she will spontaneously combine it with the progressive, as in (3-73):

(3-73) John looked out of the window. The children were arriving.

The reason for this is the following. If a perspectival sentence is followed by a point—i.e. an atomic situation which is assessed at the asserted reference time of the perspectival sentence—the sequence suggests that a subject's act of perception coincides exactly with an atomic situation which is not viewed as having consequences. While this is not impossible, it is improbable in pragmatic terms. To describe a state of affairs from the perspective

of a subject, the user will characteristically describe its assumed reference time as extended. In combination with the requirement that its asserted reference time should be atomic, this means non-stative propositions become perspectively situated if they are changed into states. In Chapter 4 we will discuss the various ways in which a non-stative proposition can be turned into a state.

If the asserted reference time of a proposition is atomic and coincides with its assumed reference time, it follows from this, the proposition will normally be portrayed as contingent and as perspectively non-situated. For the same reason propositions exhibiting a point profile are unlikely to be sequenced with a perspectival sentence unless they can be placed in its consequences. In the latter case the point is thought of as a culmination, and both propositions assume the status of perspectively non-situated events. Example (3-74) illustrates this:

(3-74) John looked at Jeanie. She winked.

Let us recapitulate. We have distinguished⁵ between two aspectual properties which contribute to perspectival immediacy —namely an asymmetrical referential centre (where r is atomic, and r' is extended), and a non-contingent meaning structure. The aspectual make-up of (non-contingent) states, which were shown to be perspectively situated, exhibits both these characteristics. Non-stative propositions, in contrast, were shown to be perspectively non-situated. This was explained in the light of the fact that their referential centre is symmetrical. Culminations and culminated processes in addition to this also evoke a contingent associated meaning structure, so that they exhibit two aspectual markers of perspectival distance (while points and processes exhibit only one, namely an asymmetrical referential centre).

In the case of *contingent states*, finally, an asymmetrical referential centre (a marker of perspectival immediacy) is combined with a contingent associated meaning structure (a marker of perspectival distance). The perspectival effect of this will be discussed in section 3.5.6 below.

We will now take a closer look at the two aspectual markers of perspective described in this section.

3.5.3 Symmetrical vs asymmetrical referential centres

The fact that propositions with an asymmetrical referential centre introduce a perspectival focus while those with a symmetrical referential centre do not can be explained as follows. In propositions with a symmetrical referential centre the interval at which a state of affairs occurs coincides with the interval at which it is asserted. Hence no single interval of the assumed reference time of the proposition is privileged over others, and states of affairs are ordered temporally with respect to each other, either as simultaneous (description) or as sequenced (narration).

Inherent to an asymmetrical referential centre, on the other hand, is the notion that interval time (the atomic asserted reference time) is privileged over others, so that, when encountering a state, the cognitive agent has to construct an interval *within* the assumed extension of the state at which it is assessed. Because this interval does not coincide with the state's actual extension, the cognitive agent will spontaneously infer that it denotes the interval at which someone is perceiving or contemplating the state of affairs.

3.5.4 Contingent vs non-contingent propositions

In addition to this, a subject does not as a rule experience time in terms of bounded units: envisaging states of affairs as discrete, and as enabling others, implies a procedure of *distan-*
tancing them from the position of the locutionary agent or narrator, because it requires the construction of a time line. Unless abstraction is made of a subject's immersion in what she perceives, thinks, or experiences, situations are not experienced, nor described, as projected on a time line. In Chapter 5 I will provide further evidence for this claim by showing that the understanding of present tense utterances with actual time reference in spoken discourse normally does not require the construction of a time line. Fictional narratives, because of their medium (the text) and their genre (they tell a story) always require the construction of a time line. But the writer retains the option not to draw attention to its linear developing dimension, by highlighting a topical rather than a contingency relation between propositions. Propositions in spoken discourse which express the locutionary agent's view, opinions or beliefs are typically governed by a relationship of topical coherence. If a state of affairs in a

narrative is described in the same way (i.e. if it is non-contingent), and if its asserted reference time is, as in the case of present tense utterances with actual time reference, atomic, the reader will spontaneously infer that someone is seeing or thinking, or, in other words, that the fictional world is described from a particular perspective.

3.5.5 Processes

In the analysis we propose, the assumed reference time of processes is characterised as extended and non-bounded, and the meaning structure associated with them is non-contingent. As we have just seen, processes share these characteristics with states, which introduce a perspectival focus. The asserted reference time of processes, however, is extended and coincides with their assumed reference time; this, as we have seen, is not typical of the way a subject experiences time. Because of this processes normally lack the capacity of states to introduce a perspectival focus.

We have also seen, however, that if processes are sequenced with states they are asserted at the same stable asserted reference time (unless a contingency relation between them is made salient). The following examples illustrate this:

- (3-75) (S)Out of the thick, fleshy leaves of a cactus there rose an aloe stem loaded with pale flowers that looked as though they had been cut out of butter; (P)light flashed upon the lifted spears of the palms; (P)over the bed of scarlet waxen flowers some big black insects 'zoom-zoomed'; (P)a great, gaudy creeper, orange splashed with jet, sprawled against the wall. (Mansfield, *The Man Without A Temperament*: 12)
- (3-76) (S)It was a cool grey morning (S)and the air was like smoke. (P)In that reversal of the elements that sometimes takes place, the grey, soft, muffled sky moved like the sea on a silent day. (P)The coat collar pressed rough against her neck (S)and her cheeks were softly cold as if they had been washed in ice- water. (P)She breathed gently with the air;(P)on the left a strip of veld fire curled silently, flameless. (P)Overhead a dove purred. (Gordimer, *Is There Nowhere Else Where We Can Meet?*: 17)

- (3-77) (S)The sky is the colour of jade. (S) There are a great many stars; (S) an enormous white moon hangs over the garden. (P)Far away lightning flutters—flutters like a wing—flutters like a broken bird that tries to fly and sinks again and again struggles. (S)The lights from the *salon* shine across the garden path and (S)there is the sound of a piano. (Mansfield, *The Man Without A Temperament*: 17)

What seems to happen in such instances is that the processes usurp the asymmetrical quality of the states, in the sense that their asserted reference time is compressed without becoming wholly atomic (as in the case of a process coerced into a state by a progressive). Through opting for a process type rather than a progressive, however, a particular stylistic effect is conveyed: the proposition retains some of the overt or developing quality which characterises a process, yet at the same time introduces a perspectival focus. Such sequences suggest that, as a subject (or anonymous observer) contemplates the scene described, time gently moves forward.

A sequence of main clauses exhibiting a state type which are not contingently related constitutes a *state complex*. All states in a state complex share the same perspectival focus: if the perspectival focus of one state in a state complex is identified as occupied by a specific individual (on the basis of semantic information and pragmatic inferences) the perspectival foci of the other states will be inferred to be occupied by the same individual.

If processes are sequenced with states and assessed at the same asserted reference time, we will say they form part of the same state complex. If processes occur in a state complex and assimilate the asymmetrical character of the states, their perspectival focus will be inferred to be occupied by the same individual which occupies the perspectival focus of the states. The following examples illustrate this:

- (3-78) (And then he became conscious of a curious old mannish little face fixed upon him in a kind of hypnotic dread.) (P)There, absolutely stilled with fear beneath his glance, crouched a very big locust. (S)What an amusing face the thing had! (S)A lugubrious long face, that somehow suggested a bald head, and such a glum mouth. (S)It looked like some little person out of a Disney cartoon. (P) It moved slightly, still looking up fearfully at him. (Gordimer, *The Soft Voice of the Serpent*: 23)

(3-79) (Finally he comes inside.) (S)The moon—the room is painted white with moonlight. (P)The light trembles in the mirrors; (S)the two beds seem to float. (S) She is asleep. (Mansfield, *The Man Without A Temperament*: 18)

(3-80) (At last she turned on the light and looked at Ernest lying beside her.) (S)He was sound asleep. (P)He snored. (P)But even though he snored, his nose remained perfectly still. (S) It looked as if it had never twitched at all. (S)Was it possible that this was really Ernest; and that she was really married to Ernest? (Woolf, *Lappin And Lapinova*: 25-26)

3.5.6 Contingent states

In the previous section I argued that establishing contingency relations between consecutive states of affairs implies a distancing procedure. This means *contingent states* exhibit two contrastive perspectival markers: one which conveys perspectival immediacy (their referential centre is asymmetrical) and one which introduces perspectival distance (they are contingent).

To account for this contrast an analysis in terms of two referential parameters is crucial. We have seen that if a proposition is contingent its *asserted reference time* is placed in the consequences of the proposition which precedes it. In the case of events, however, this asserted reference time coincides with the assumed reference time (i.e. the actual interval at which the state of affairs takes place), so that the latter, too, automatically becomes contingent.

Contingent states, however, retain the asymmetrical profile of non-contingent states. This means that, although their asserted reference time is contingently related to that of a preceding proposition, and is therefore not stable, it does not follow that their assumed reference time also becomes contingent. Because the referential centre of contingent states remains asymmetrical their assumed reference time will still extend at one or both sides of the asserted reference time. In other words, unlike in the case of events the *actual* situation described by contingent states is not conceived of as including reference to a culmination, and is therefore not subject to the distancing procedure this implies. In this respect their perspectival status resembles that of *non-contingent* states, which, as was pointed out earlier, is suggestive of the way a subject experiences time. Because of this contingent states are, like non-contingent states, perspectivally situated. Contingent states differ from non-contingent states, however, in that their asserted reference time is placed in the consequences of the proposition which

precedes it, so that the sentence introduces temporal update. In this respect contingent states resemble events. In combination, these two aspectual characteristics convey that the interval at which a subject experiences is a culmination, and is temporally sequenced with the asserted reference time of the proposition which precedes it.

Our analysis thus explains why contingent states may function both as a consequence of the proposition which precedes them and as overlapping with it: while their asserted reference time is placed in the consequences associated with (the asserted reference time of) the proposition which precedes them, their assumed reference time is not. The following examples illustrate this:

(3-81) “Can you come tomorrow?” Yes, he had no engagement at all for tomorrow. (Austen, *Emma*: 88)

(3-82) “Go away, I am not making myself ill.” No, she was drinking the very elixir of life through that open window. (Chopin, *The Awakening*: 83)

The second sentence in example (3-81) is a state, and therefore introduces a perspectival focus. Two subject-oriented features (the semantic indicator “yes” and the deictic adverb “tomorrow”.) indicate that this perspectival focus is occupied by a subject-of-consciousness, which is most plausibly identified as the male protagonist. The actual situation described—i.e. that of the male protagonist having no engagement for the next day—most plausibly extends in time to overlap with the speech event which precedes the sentence and any subsequently described situations. But its asserted reference time—in this case: the time at which the words are uttered—is to be placed in the consequences of the preceding speech event, to which it constitutes a reply, and is therefore to be interpreted as occurring after it. The same observations apply to example (3-82), except for the fact that the asserted reference time here denotes the moment at which the content of the sentence is contemplated by the female protagonist (in response to the preceding speech event), rather than the time of a (represented) speech act.

Contingent states often convey a very particular psychological effect: in many cases, they seem to indicate that a state of affairs begins to happen, but that it is only *after* it is already in progress that a subject in the text realises what is going on. This effect can be achieved by combining a state with a definite adverbial which specifies this meaning component (e.g.

suddenly), as in (3-83):

- (3-83) He turned away. Suddenly he was back again. (Mansfield, *The Man Without A Temperament*: 13)

But a similar quasi-inceptive effect may be conveyed by a temporally unmarked state, provided context makes salient a contingency relation between the perception of the state and the state of affairs described in the sentence which precedes it, and allows for the inference that a character in the text suddenly becomes aware of the fact that the situation obtains. The following example illustrates this:

- (3-84) His leg is in her way—it thrashes, she thrusts, and a piece of cliff [...] shifts under her clutching hands...crumbles...and she is falling thwack backwards on her shoulders, her head, her outflung arm [...]. (Lively, *Moon Tiger*: 4)

Dowty (1986) claims that contingent progressives *only* allow for this particular interpretation: their asserted reference time cannot be the first interval of their assumed reference time. When the associated psychological effect cannot be inferred, he says, it will be hard to get a felicitous quasi-inceptive reading for a contingent progressive. Dowty explains the oddity of example (3-85) in this light:

- (3-85) ? John dropped the letter from the bridge and watched it hit the swiftly flowing water. (Suddenly) the water was carrying the letter downstream and out of sight.

In this example, the progressive in the third clause can, given its context, only be interpreted as a contingent state. This means it elicits a quasi-inceptive interpretation. However, such a quasi-inceptive interpretation implies a momentary lapse of consciousness on the part of John, and the semantic content of the verb in the second clause (“watched”) is in conflict with this inference. Even with the insertion of the adverbial, the sequence remains a bit puzzling, because the surprise effect conveyed by the progressive cannot plausibly be construed in accordance with its context.

In other instances a contingent state may be purely *inceptive*, in the sense that its asserted reference time coincides with the first interval of its assumed reference time, as in the following examples:

(3-86) (she)[...]tried to drag herself between the wires, but her coat got caught on a barb, and she was imprisoned there. (Gordimer, *Is There Nowhere Else Where We Can Meet?*: 19)

(3-87) [...]; wobbling, frantic, she climbed over the fence. And she was out. (Gordimer, *Is There Nowhere Else Where We Can Meet?*: 19)

But this is not in conflict with our analysis, because the referential centre of such contingent state remains asymmetrical.

In conclusion, contingent states, like non-contingent states, introduce a perspectival focus, and are therefore perspectivally situated. It follows from this that a non-contingent meaning structure is not a necessary condition for a proposition to be interpreted as non-contingent. The introduction of a perspectival focus, however, is congenial to a non-contingent meaning structure, which constitutes another aspectual marker of perspectival immediacy. The aspectual structure of contingent states thus combines perspectival immediacy with perspectival distance. Because of this they convey a specific stylistic effect: the extrospective and mobile dimension of dramatic development converges with a state's capacity to introduce a perspectival focus, and its potential for suggesting introspection and subjective awareness.

3.6 Conclusion

In this chapter I have introduced an aspectual classification consisting of six aspectual types. Each of these types was defined in terms of two parameters: the aspectual properties of their referential centre (which consists of an asserted and an assumed reference time) and the meaning structure associated with them (which may be contingent or topical). It was shown how the notion of an associated meaning structure makes it possible to capture both semantic and pragmatic elements which contribute to the temporal interpretation of consecutive sentences, and discussed how sentences in narrative provide an antecedent context for the interpretation of (temporally unmarked) sentences which come after them.

On the basis of this a distinction was made between (temporally unmarked) sentences which convey forward movement in time on an imaginary time line, and sentences which do not. Narrative time moves forward if the asserted reference time of a sentence can be contingently related to that of the sentence which precedes it. Sentences exhibiting an *event* or a *contingent*

state profile elicit this interpretation, and are said to narrate. Through narration, an element of perspectival distance is introduced between narrator and statement. Narrative time does not move forward, on the other hand, if a sentence is topically rather than contingently related to the sentence which precedes it. Sentences exhibiting a *point*, *process* or (*non-contingent*) *state* profile elicit this interpretation, and are said to describe. Description is suggestive of perspectival immediacy.

It is not the type of relationship which is made salient between a sentence and the one which precedes it, however, which determines whether a sentence is *perspectivally situated* or *perspectivally non-situated*. This, we have shown, depends on the symmetricity or asymmetricity of their referential centre. Propositions the referential centre of which is asymmetrical (i.e. (contingent and non-contingent) *states*) are perspectivally situated: upon encountering them, the reader will spontaneously construct a perspectival focus on the described state of affairs, even in the absence of semantic features which are suggestive of the presence of an evaluating consciousness. Propositions the referential centre of which is symmetrical (i.e. all non-stative types), on the other hand, are perspectivally non-situated and do not normally require the construction of a perspectival focus for their interpretation.

Propositions with an asymmetrical referential centre (or states) were said to be perspectivally situated because one subinterval of the assumed reference time of the situation is privileged over others. Because of this the reader will be inclined to interpret this interval as the time at which a (hypothetical or actual) subject contemplates the state of affairs described. Normally the asserted reference time of such a proposition is stable—i.e. the interval at which the situation is asserted is not viewed as bringing about a change of state. In some instances, however, the perception or assessment of a state of affairs by a subject may be described as the consequence of a preceding state of affairs, and as bringing about a change of state. Contingent states therefore combine two contrastive perspectival emphases: they create the impression of forward movement in time (which is associated with perspectival distance) while at the same time introducing a perspectival focus. This apparent contradiction was explained in terms of the fact that the asserted and the assumed reference time of contingent states do not coincide. Because of this the contingent nature of the asserted reference time does not extend to the assumed reference time, and this contrast can be exploited to combine perspectival immediacy with narrative distance.

In the next chapter I will discuss the aspectual properties of different types of states in more detail.

Chapter 4

States and Stative Operators

4.1 Introduction

In the previous chapter it was argued that state sentences introduce a perspectival focus into a narrative. This, we claimed, is due to the fact that the structure of their asymmetrical referential centre corresponds to the way a subject typically experiences time. In addition to this, we pointed out that the meaning structure associated with a perspectivally situated proposition is typically non-contingent—although, as we have shown, contingent states are also perspectivally situated.

A reader identifies a contextualised proposition as a state either on the basis of the lexical-semantic properties of its verbal predicate or because the aspectual profile of its verbal predicate is coerced into a state through an intrasentential operator or context. In this chapter, we will take a closer look at different types of states and stative operators. As we have already discussed how context may coerce a state proposition into a contingent state, we will focus on non-contingent states.

Throughout our discussion, we will draw attention to different ways in which the stable atomic interval (which does not have consequences associated with it) normally required for the interpretation of a state may be introduced into a narrative. We will also give more backbone to our claim that propositions exhibiting a state profile often attract subject-oriented features or are often sequenced with a perspectival sentence, so that their perspectival focus is inter-

puted as occupied by a subject in the text, rather than by a neutral anonymous observer. We will say that in such cases the introduced perspective is *subjective*.

Before turning our attention to different types of states, however, we will first take another look at their position in the aspectual typology introduced in the previous chapter.

4.2 Operators, functions and transition paths

4.2.1 The transition network

In the approach we propose, contextualised tensed clauses may be basic propositions (if they are not coerced by semantic operators or context), expanded propositions, or conglomerates of expanded propositions. The aspectual profile of a proposition is *coerced* if the interval properties of its referential centre, or its associated meaning structure, are changed by an operator in the clause, or by context.

Operators are characterised in terms of their *function*. A function stipulates what the aspectual profile of a proposition has to look like before it can serve as *input* for a particular operator, and specifies how this profile changes when the operator is applied, resulting in a coerced profile (its *output*).

Because of this the typology we rely on is *dynamic*: it incorporates not only the different aspectual categories, but also shows how these categories may change when an operator applies. These changes are represented in terms of one or more *transition paths*. Because of its dynamic nature, the typology is referred to as a *transition network*. All this is in line with the approach proposed by Moens (1987) who first introduced the concept of an aspectual transition network.

Non-stative profiles are coerced into states if they combine with a *stative operator*. Apart from context, which we will discuss separately at the end of this chapter, there are three types of stative operators: the *progressive*, the *perfect*, and *structural operators* (which include certain types of adverbials and complements). In addition to lexical states (which are basic propositions), therefore, we distinguish between three types of expanded state propositions,

namely *progressive states*, *perfect states* and *structural states*.¹

The full transition network, which encapsulates the aspectual profiles of both basic and expanded propositions, looks like this:

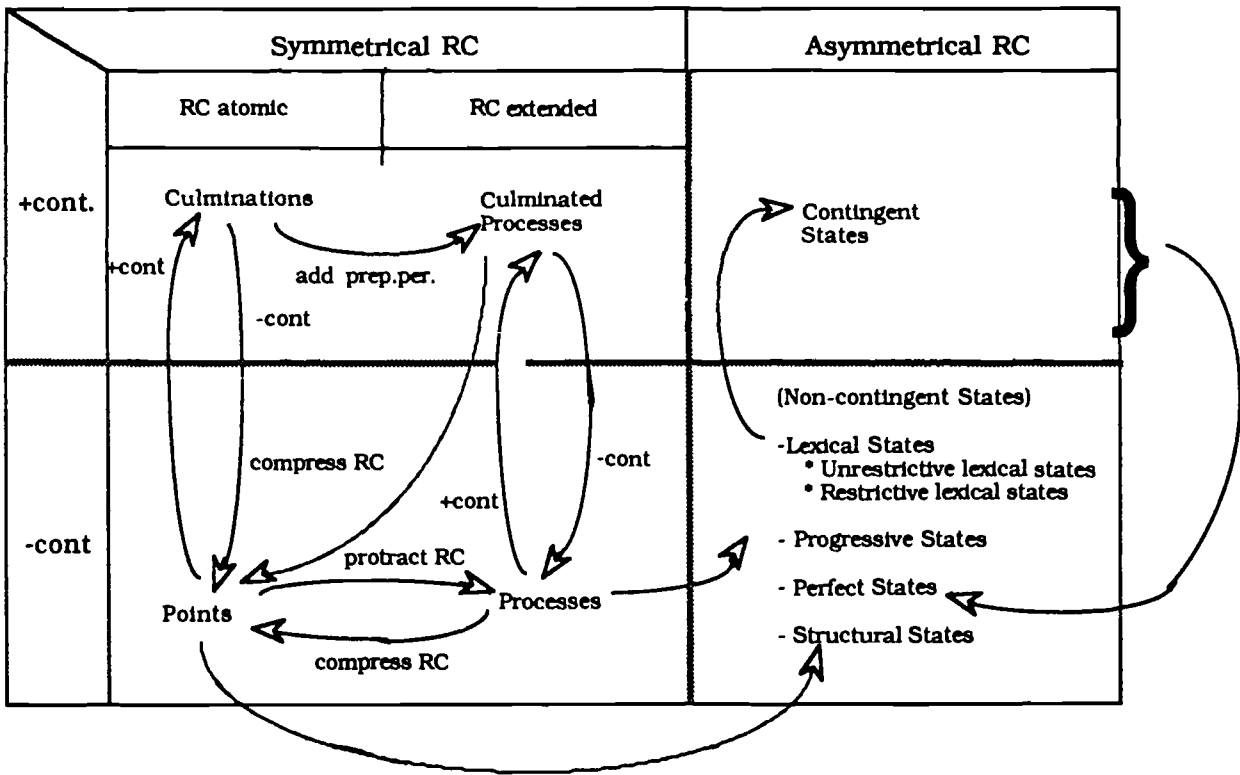


Figure 4-1: The full transition network
(cf. Meaux 1987: 61)

In the next section, we will provide a brief description of the different transition paths.

¹Structural states are more commonly called “habituals”. In 4.6 we explain why the term “structural” was chosen instead.

4.2.2 The transition paths

A. Paths from one symmetrical RC to another symmetrical RC

i. Vertical paths 1. Paths from contingent to non-contingent categories:

- the transition from *culmination* to *point*, which involves stripping off the contingency structure associated with the culmination. This transition applies if a culmination has to be coerced into the appropriate antecedent context for a subsequent state proposition which is not contingently related to it. The transition may also form part of a more complex coercive procedure if a culmination combines with

(i) a structural (or habitual) operator which, as we will see below, requires as its input a point:

(4-1) John always knocks

(ii) a progressive operator, which requires as its input a process. As there is no direct transition path from culmination to process, the culmination may be coerced into a process via the point node:

(4-2) The concert is beginning.

- the transition from *culminated process* to *process*, which involves stripping the culminated process of its culmination, and hence of the consequences associated with it. This transition is required if a culminated process combines with a progressive operator, because, as we will see presently, only process profiles can serve as input for a progressive:

(4-3) Jon was painting a picture.

2. Paths from non-contingent to contingent categories:

- the transition from *point* to *culmination*, which involves conceiving of the point proposition as a culmination, so that it has a contingency structure (and hence consequences) associated with it. This transition is required if a point proposition is followed by a proposition which is contingently related to it:

(4-4) Jeany burped and we put her to bed.

- the transition from *process* to *culminated process* which involves assigning a culmination (and hence consequences), to the process. This transition is required

when a process proposition combines with a telic adverbial or complement, which reinforces the notion of a limitation upon it. Such adverbials include prepositional phrases indicative of a boundary (walk vs walk to the station), those complements in object position which Halliday (1967) refers to as *range objects* NPs (walk vs walk a mile), and those complements traditionally termed *effected objects* (bake vs bake a cake). This transition path also applies if a process proposition is followed by another proposition which is contingently related to it:

(4-5) John ran a mile.

ii. Horizontal transition paths: 1. Paths from atomic to extended intervals:

- the transition from *culmination* to *culminated process*, which involves adding the preparatory period associated with the culmination. This transition may be required if a culmination combines with a progressive operator, which demands a process as its input. In the absence of a direct route from culmination to process, a culmination can be coerced into a process via the culminated process node (cf. below):

(4-6) The train was arriving.

- the transition from *point* to *process*, which involves protracting the two atomic intervals which constitute the referential centre of the point proposition into extended but unbounded (and therefore by definition non-contingent) intervals. This transition applies when a point proposition combines with an adverbial expression which introduces an extended temporal interval without specifying a culmination. This results in the point proposition being described as *iterated* over an extended but non-contingent interval:

(4-7) John hiccoughed all evening.

2. Paths from extended to atomic profiles:

- the transition from *process* to *point*, which involves making the referential centre atomic by compressing it. This transition is required if a process proposition combines with structural operator, which, as we will see below, requires as its input a point:

(4-8) John always smokes when he's waiting for the bus.

iii. Diagonal path: • the transition from *culminated process* to *point*, which involves compressing the two intervals which constitute the referential centre of the process

into non-contingent atomic intervals. This transition is required if a culminated process proposition combines with a structural operator, which demands as its input a point. Although this is a single transition path, it involves two coercive procedures.

(4-9) John wrote her a letter every week.

B. Paths from a symmetrical to an asymmetrical RC

- the transition from *process* to *progressive state*, which involves coercing the proposition's asserted reference time into an atomic interval; this transition is required when a proposition combines with a progressive operator:

(4-10) John was working in the garden.

- the transition from *culmination* to (*perfect*) *state*, which involves shifting the assumed reference time of the proposition to its consequences, which are assessed at an atomic asserted reference time. This transition is required when a proposition combines with a perfect operator:

(4-11) John has left.

- the transition from *point* to *structural state*, which involves protracting the proposition's assumed reference time into a time line and describing the point as iterated over this time line. This iteration is assessed at an atomic asserted reference time. This transition applies when a proposition combines with a structural operator:

(4-12) John always knocks

The characterisation of the last three paths implicitly provides us with a description of the input and output conditions of the three types of operators which coerce non-stative profiles into states. These can schematically be represented as follows:

- **progressive operator**

input: process

function: asserted reference time is compressed into an atomic interval

output: progressive state

- **perfect operator**

input: culmination

function: the consequences of the culmination are described as holding at an atomic asserted reference time

output: perfect state

• **structural operator**

input: point

function: the assumed reference time is protracted into an time line over which the state of affairs is described as iterated; this iteration is asserted at an atomic reference time

output: structural state

If non-stative propositions with profiles different from the input types for each of the operators combine with the respective operators, their referential centre and/or their associated meaning structure will have to be coerced to meet the requirements imposed by the category which serves as input for the function concerned, before the function of the operator can apply. In such cases, more than one transition will be required for the original profile to be changed into the type which constitutes the output of the operator's function. Thus culminations, culminated processes and points are to be coerced into a process before they can serve as input for a progressive. Culminations, culminated processes and processes need a transition via the point node before they can combine with a structural operator. And culminated processes, processes and points are to be turned into culminations before the function of a perfect operator can be applied.

Stative operators are of particular interest to us because by combining with a stative operator a non-stative proposition becomes perspectively situated. This is why in this chapter we are chiefly concerned with a further description of the function of stative operators. A discussion of other common operators, such as prepositional phrases with *for*, *until* and *in*, and *when*-clauses, in a framework very similar to ours can be found in Moens (1987: 66-73; 105-113).

Although we will discuss the different types of states individually, we will throughout our discussion draw attention to the aspectual characteristics they share. Because of these characteristics consecutive states, even if they belong to different categories, exhibit the same perspectival properties. As already pointed out, a sequence of states which are all assessed at

the same asserted reference time is referred to as a *state complex*. States in a state complex share the same perspectival focus.

4.3 Lexical states

So far we have treated lexical states, or basic state propositions, as one category. A further distinction, however, can be made in terms of the domain of the assumed reference time of lexical states. As we have seen, this assumed reference time is always a non-bounded interval, in the sense that no explicit reference is made to the time at which the state comes about or comes to an end. But there are two types of non-bounded intervals. A non-bounded interval is *restrictive* if the state of affairs described can be viewed as *temporary*; it is *unrestrictive* if the state of affairs is intrinsic to the subject predicated upon. Thus (4-13) is a restrictive state

(4-13) Barbara was bored and depressed.

while (4-14) is an unrestrictive one:²

(4-14) John is tall and handsome.

When the distinction is applied to narrative, it can be rephrased as follows. *Restrictive* states present a state of affairs as extending over a *segment* on the time line under construction, and are therefore viewed as having come about at some point on this time line, and anticipated to stop or cease to hold at another. Because the states of affairs described by *unrestrictive* states, on the other hand, are intrinsic to an entity in the fictional reality, their assumed reference time coincides with the *whole* of the time line under construction.

The following constitute examples of restrictive or temporary lexical states:

(4-15) She is asleep. [...] Her white cheeks, her fair hair pressed against the pillow, are silvered over. (Mansfield, *The Man Without A Temperament*: 18)

²Anderson (1973: 5) (also Comrie (1976: 104)) refers to the same distinction in terms of the opposition between *contingent* or *temporary* states on the one hand, and *absolute* states on the other. However, since we employ the term *contingent* specifically to refer to enablement and causality relations between associated states of affairs, we will avoid using it in any other sense.

(4-16) She was puzzled and frightened; she wanted to explain something; but she was tired and muddled. (White, *The House of Clouds*: 56)

(4-17) The lawn is covered with a wavy pattern of cat's-paws; there is a thick, thick icing on the garden table; the withered pods of the laburnum tree are white tassels; only here and there in the ivy is a dark leaf showing. (Mansfield, *The Man Without A Temperament*: 10)

The clauses in the following two passages, on the other hand, constitute unrestrictive states:

(4-18) I like country dancing. I do it well and I look good doing it. (Godwin, *A southern Family*: 215)

(4-19) My mother's family lived in a large white house near an apple orchard, in Nova Scotia. There was a barn and a carriage house; in the kitchen there was a pantry. (Atwood, *Significant Moments in the Life of my Mother*: 13)

The assumed reference time of restrictive states is thus conceived of in the same way as that of processes. In the previous chapter we pointed out that processes may form part of a state complex without their combining with a stative operator. In such instances the process assimilates the asymmetrical quality of a state (and hence becomes perspectively situated) without completely losing the "developing" dimension of processes. Processes are only conceived of in this way, however, if they occur in an environment of (topically related) *restrictive* states. The following examples illustrate this:

(4-20) [S] The delicious breath of rain was in the air. [S] In the street below a peddler was crying his wares. [P] The notes of a distant song which some one was singing reached her faintly, [S] and countless sparrows were twittering in the eaves. (Chopin, *The Story of an Hour*: 82)

(4-21) [S] Three little girls, having thoughtfully taken off their drawers and hung them on a bush, their skirts clasped to their waists, were standing in the tubs and tramping up and down. [P] They screamed, [P] their hair fell over their faces, [P] they splashed one another. (Mansfield, *The Man Without A Temperament*: 12)

(4-22) [P] On this remote seat, with their backs turned on lovers, lights, the town, the two girls sat [P] and gazed wordlessly at the dark sea, over which great Jupiter was flinging a thin gold line. [S] There was no sound but the lapping, sucking, sighing, of the ripples at the edge of the breakwater, and the occasional screech of an owl in the tall trees on the hillside. (Richardson, *Two Hanged Women*: 50)

In an environment of *unrestrictive* lexical states, on the other hand, processes behave differently: the situation they describe is viewed as habitual or characteristic. Thus in the following passage, the third, fourth and sixth clause would, if decontextualised, be interpreted as processes. Because of the unrestrictive context in which the processes occur, however, they are viewed as characteristic, and therefore intrinsic to the reality described. As we will see in section 4.6, this means they are coerced into a structural (or habitual) *state*:

- (4-23) [ULS] The structure of the house was hierarchical, with my grandfather at the top, [ULS] but its secret life—the life of pie crusts, clean sheets, the box of rags in the linen closet, the loaves in the oven— was female. [P/ST] The house, and all the objects in it, crackled with static electricity. [P/ST] Undertows washed through it, [ULS] the air was heavy with things that were known but not spoken. (P/ULS) Like a hollow log, a drum, a church, it amplified [...]. (Atwood, *Significant Moments in the Life of my Mother*: 13)

(ULS=unrestrictive lexical state; P=process; ST=structural state)

As in the case of unrestrictive lexical states, the assumed reference time of structural states coincides with the whole of the time line under construction, and their asserted reference time is atomic. We will come back to this in section 4.6.

In the rest of this dissertation we will use square brackets to indicate that an interval coincides with a segment on a time line, and angular brackets to mark that an interval coincides with the whole of a time line. If a segment on a timeline is non-contingent, we will indicate this by putting the square brackets used to mark the segment between round brackets. Hence the contrast between processes, restrictive states and unrestrictive states can be represented schematically as follows:

$$\begin{array}{ccc}
 (\text{O}////\text{r}'////(\text{O})) & (\text{O}////\text{r}'////(\text{O})) & <////\text{r}'////> \\
 (\text{O}////\text{r}////(\text{O})) & [\text{r}] & [\text{r}] \\
 \text{(RC of processes)} & \text{(RC of restrictive states)} & \text{(RC of nonrestrictive states)}
 \end{array}$$

On the basis of this, we can distinguish between two types of assumed reference times, namely *segments on a time line* and *time lines*. In addition to this, segments on a time line may be either contingent (as in the case of culminated processes and culminations) or non-contingent (as in the case of points, processes and restrictive states). The assumed reference time of

unrestrictive states is a time line, and therefore non-contingent.

4.4 The progressive

4.4.1 Functional characteristics

As noted earlier, the functional nature of the progressive operator can be described in terms of two characteristics: a progressive takes as its input a process, and it describes this process as ongoing or in progress at a particular point in time, by compressing its asserted reference time into an atomic interval. Sentences encoding a progressive therefore exhibit the aspectual properties of a state.

4.4.2 Process propositions combining with the progressive

Basic propositions which exhibit a process profile, it follows from our definition, unproblematically encode progressive auxiliaries, since their profile does not need to be coerced into another category before it can serve as input for the progressive operator. The following example illustrates this:

- (4-24) (1) Alcee got up and joined her at the window, looking over her shoulder.
(2) The rain was coming down in sheets obscuring the view of far-off cabins
and enveloping the distant wood in a gray mist. (3) The playing of the
lightning was incessant. (Chopin, *The Storm*: 2)

In this passage, the atomic reference time for the *second* sentence, which is a progressive state, is provided by the preceding event (*joined her*) which is to be coerced accordingly from a culmination into a point. The next sentence, which constitutes a lexical state, is asserted at the same stable atomic asserted reference time as the progressive state, and the two consecutive states form a state complex.

The progressive processes in the following examples are asserted at the (stable) asserted reference time of the clause which precedes them. In the first example this is a perfect state (clauses encoding a perfect, as we will see below, are states), in the second example it is a lexical state:

(4-25) The train had escaped from the ugly fringes of the city, and the soft spring landscape was gliding past her. (Wharton, *Atrophy*: 29)

(4-26) Here the road ran narrow and foul between high lean houses, the ground floors of which were scooped and hollowed into stables and carpenters' shops. At a fountain ahead of him two old hags were beating linen. (Mansfield, *The Man Without A Temperament*: 14)

The following two examples illustrate that progressives, like other types of states, introduce a perspectival focus. In (4-27) the progressive clause reflects the third person protagonist's words:

(4-27) He told her not to hurry back, but if she and the babies liked it at Biloxi, to stay a month longer. He was getting on nicely. (Chopin, *The Storm*: 5)

Similarly in (4-28), the semantic content of the progressive is most plausibly interpreted as constituting the thoughts of the male protagonist:

(4-28) He hears her stirring. Does she want something? "Boogles?" Good Lord! She is talking in her sleep! (Mansfield, *The Man Without A Temperament*: 18)

4.4.3 Point propositions combining with the progressive

For a point proposition to felicitously combine with a progressive, its profile is to be coerced into a process first. As the transition network shows, this involves protracting both the asserted and the assumed reference time of the proposition into an extended non-contingent interval. This is achieved by conceiving of the point expression as iterated over a non-bounded segment on a time line. The resulting process profile can then serve as input for a progressive auxiliary. Example (4-29) illustrates this:

(4-29) When they reached the lift she was coughing. (Mansfield, *The Man Without A Temperament*: 15)

The atomic asserted reference time of the progressive state in (4-29) is provided by a temporal adverbial, viz. the *when*-clause. For a *when*-clause to provide the appropriate antecedent context for a progressive state (namely a stable atomic asserted reference time) it has to exhibit a point profile. In this particular case, this means that the culmination expression it

contains is coerced into a point, so that it no longer carries intimations of contingently related states of affairs.

4.4.4 Culminated process propositions combining with the progressive

The aspectual profile of a culminated process, too, has to be coerced into a process before the proposition can combine with a progressive operator. This involves stripping the proposition of its culmination: although its referential centre remains symmetrical and extended, it is no longer conceived of as contingent. Thus in (4-30)

- (4-30) Then [...] they entered cautiously at the back door. Calixta *was preparing* supper. (Chopin, *The Storm*: 5)

the basic proposition *Calixta prepared supper* is to be stripped of its culmination and consequences before it can serve as input for the progressive operator. The output proposition describes the resulting process as ongoing at the asserted reference time of the preceding sentence (the original culmination profile of which is, as in example (4-29), to be coerced into a point).

4.4.5 Culmination propositions combining with a progressive

The network shows that for a culmination to be coerced into a process two transition routes are possible.

The culmination may first be coerced, via a vertical path, into a point. This involves changing its associated meaning structure, so that it no longer evokes a contingency structure. This point can then, via a horizontal path, be coerced into a process, by iterating it over an non-bounded interval. Example (4-31) illustrates this:

- (4-31) Chimneys were just beginning to send out evening smoke, and most of the factory motors had been switched off. (Sillitoe, *The Fishing-Boat Picture*: 139)

Note that the second clause, which is a perfect state, is interpreted at the stable asserted reference time of the progressive clause.

Alternatively, the culmination may be coerced into a process via the culminated process node. Consider example (4-32):

(4-32) The train was arriving.

To interpret (4-32), the preparatory period associated with the proposition through the contingency structure it evokes first has to be added to its referential centre. In the case of the basic proposition *the train arrived*, this preparatory period could plausibly be paraphrased as the process *the train approached the station*. The resulting culminated process can be further coerced, via a vertical path, into a process by stripping it of its culmination (and hence of the consequences associated with it)—which is, in (4-32), the atomic interval at which the train actually arrives. The resulting process can then serve as input for the progressive operator, which will describe it as ongoing without asserting that the original culmination actually takes place (which also means that no consequences are associated with it).

Deciding which of these alternative routes is the more plausible one obviously depends on the semantic content of the culmination expression and pragmatic inferences.

As Moens (1987: 90) points out, describing the meaning of progressive culminations and culminated processes in terms of their culmination being stripped off before they can serve as input for the progressive provides an elegant solution to the problem of the so-called *imperfective paradox* (Dowty 1979: 133-154). As we have seen the attainment of a culmination at which a change of state takes place is viewed as inherent to the lexical meaning of both culmination and culminated process expressions. The imperfective paradox concerns the fact that this seems to be at odds with the observation that when culmination and culminated process expressions combine with a progressive auxiliary, this culmination no longer forms part of their truth conditions. Indeed, there is no contradiction in continuing such expanded propositions with sentences which explicitly state that the culmination referred to by the original proposition is not reached, as in

(4-33) The train was arriving when the accident happened.

(4-34) John was writing a dissertation, but he gave up when he became ill.

By stipulating that the original profile of culminations and culminated processes is to be

coerced before it can combine with a progressive, the imperfective paradox can be accounted for without having to appeal to theory-external constructs such as inertia worlds.

4.4.6 Restrictive lexical states combining with the progressive

Restrictive lexical states resemble processes in that their assumed reference time implies that the state of affairs they describe began and will finish at some undefined point—in other words, it is a non-bounded segment on a time line. They differ from them, however, in that they are assessed at an atomic interval which forms part of their assumed reference time, rather than at a protracted interval identical with the assumed reference time.

This means that for a restrictive lexical state to combine with a progressive, its asserted reference time has to be protracted into an extended non-contingent interval first. The progressive function will, in turn, compress this interval again.

The transformation of a restrictive state into a progressive state is thus felicitous only if it is possible to conceive of the restrictive state as a process first. Because the asserted reference time of processes coincides with their assumed reference time, they portray a situation as overt and implicitly developing in time; indeed, this is the only respect in which their meaning representation differs from that of restrictive states. Thus, coercing a restrictive state into a process may be possible if the state of affairs is given an overt and developing dimension, e.g. by bestowing upon it the implication of deliberate or purposeful behaviour, a conscious effort, or some kind of pretence or play-acting. If context and world knowledge make it possible to think of the state of affairs in this way, the resulting process can felicitously combine with the progressive operator, which will describe it as in progress at a particular point in time. The following example illustrates this:

(4-35) Fred is being polite.

If no plausible appropriate context can be construed, however, the combination of the restrictive state with a progressive will sound odd:

- (4-36) a Magnus is drunk.
b ?Magnus is being drunk.

- (4-37) a Nicole was bored, and cold, and miserable.
 b ? Nicole was being bored, and cold, and miserable.

4.4.7 Unrestrictive lexical states combining with the progressive

In the case of *unrestrictive states*, the type of coercing required to transform the meaning of the original predicate into a process, so that it can serve as input for a progressive is more elaborate and, in pragmatic terms, generally more implausible. As we have seen the assumed reference time of an unrestrictive state covers a *time line*. To be made compatible with a progressive, however, its assumed reference time is to be conceived of as a *segment* on a time line, so that the situation described can be envisaged as having come about (relatively) recently and as coming to an end at an equally undefined point. In other words, the situation is to be thought of as transient and temporary, rather than intrinsic and permanent. And in addition to this, its meaning is to be manipulated in such a way that it can be interpreted as describing an overt and developing situation, rather than an inert one. Only very few unrestrictive states allow for such a radical change in meaning, but one could construct a context in which the unrestrictive state in (4-38)

- (4-38) André is a real racist.

can plausibly be combined with a progressive operator, as in (4-39)

- (4-39) André is being a real racist.

which carries the implication of purposeful obnoxious behaviour on André's part. Again, world knowledge may make the required type of coercing infelicitous. This explains why the following progressive constructions are unacceptable:

- (4-40) a Violets are blue.
 b ?Violets are being blue.
- (4-41) a Renee owns a house.
 b ?Renee is owning a house.

4.4.8 Distinguishing processes from states

One advantage of the proposed definition of the progressive function is that it provides us with a criterion to distinguish processes from lexical states. If a proposition can unproblematically combine with a progressive without this involving any change to the original meaning of the predicate, the expression should be classified as a process. If it cannot, it is to be categorised as a state. Such a diagnostic test is more in line with the classification of linguistic material that we are aiming to provide than specifications of the process/state in terms of input of energy, which tend to reduce the classification to an ontological one.

It follows from this that predicates such as *wear*, *sit*, *enjoy* etc., which are often classified as states, are more accurately characterised as processes, or at least as potentially exhibiting either a process or a state profile. Thus in examples (4-42) and (4-43)

(4-42) It was cold, with fog in the air, and Rosalind was sitting over the fire, sewing. (Woolf, *Lappin And Lapinova*: 25)

(4-43) Loulou is in the coach-house, wedging clay. She's wearing a pair of running shoes, once white, now grey, over men's wool work socks [...]. (Atwood, *Loulou, or the domestic life of the language*: 61)

the ease with which the verbal predicates *to sit* and *to wear* combine with a progressive auxiliary indicates that the aspectual structure of a process is intrinsic to the meaning of the basic proposition.

Our approach also clarifies Vendler's (1967) observation that achievements (culminations) and states cannot occur in the progressive. Vendler's claim is too strong: both combinations are possible if context and world knowledge support the transitions required to make sense of them. But the intuition underlying Vendler's observations is basically correct, in the sense that contexts in which states or culminations felicitously encode a progressive are harder to construct than in the case of culminated processes, processes and points, because the former involve a greater number of transitions (in the case of a culmination) or a more radical coercing (in the case of a lexical state) of the original profile.

4.4.9 Progressive states and perspective

Another issue that can be accounted for in the light of the approach presented here concerns the difference between processes in the simple form and those in the progressive. Thus, both the (a) and the (b) sentences in the following examples describe an overt, developing, non-bounded but temporary situation:

- (4-44) a Her pulses beat fast, and the coursing blood warmed and relaxed every inch of her body. (Chopin, *The Awakening*: 83)
b Her pulses were beating fast, and the coursing blood was warming and relaxing every inch of her body.
- (4-45) a The sun blazed out and steam rose from the green behind us. (Rhys, *Wide Sargasso Sea*: 58)
b The sun was blazing out and steam was rising from the green behind us.

None of the sentences move narrative time forward; the general impression they convey is one of states of affairs holding or extending simultaneously. It is therefore not obvious what the progressive auxiliary adds to the meaning of process predicates, unless one considers the distinction in the light of the progressive's capacity (which we defined as crucial to its function) to single out an atomic reference time: a progressive state presents a process at a certain moment of its actualisation—the point at which the situation described is assessed as extending or in progress.

This aspectual property is traditionally characterised in terms of temporal framing or contouring (cf. Jespersen 1924: 178; also Allen 1966; Hirtle 1967). It is most transparent in clauses where the asserted reference time for the progressive is explicitly provided, for example by a punctual temporal adverbial, as in (4-46)

- (4-46) At one o'clock, Geoff was working in the garden.

But even if the asserted reference time of a progressive is not specified by a temporal adverbial, the effect is the same; thus, the (b) sentences in examples (4-44) and (4-45) quoted earlier differ from their simple form counterparts in that they implicitly invite the reader to contemplate the situation they describe at a particular moment of its unfolding—as a subject would experience it.

And this brings us back to the relationship between aspect and perspective: because of ~~its~~ aspectual make-up, a progressive state introduces a perspectival focus into a narrative, which may be identified as occupied by a particular subject. As a result of this, progressives have the capacity to describe a situation as the object of introspection on the part of a subject. This explains why they may be used to denote a subjective intention or anticipation, as in their futurate use:

(4-47) I am leaving tomorrow.

(4-48) Anna declined the offer ~~of~~ a drink. She was driving.

The following examples show that they share this capacity with (restrictive) lexical states:

(4-49) I am at home tomorrow.

(4-50) Patrick declined the invitation. He was busy tomorrow.

The same principle lies at the basis of the use of the so-called “interpretative progressive” (Jespersen 1954: 128). An interpretative progressive does not merely reflect that the situation described is filtered through the perceptual or conceptual apparatus of a subject: the perspectival refraction is so strong that the progressive state “translates” the situation in terms of what it means, or signifies, to the experiencing subject. Example (4-51) illustrates this:

(4-51) (“No.” She smiled. “But I’m here now and I’m sure you could teach me a lot about it. For a start, how was Belvedere different from you other school, La Fosse? They were both all-male schools, both private schools...”) She was drawing him out. (Godwin, *A Southern Family*: 274)

4.4.10 Conclusion

In conclusion, the function of the progressive operator can be specified in terms of two characteristics. First of all, it takes as its input a process, i.e. an overt, developing, extended but non-contingent situation. And second, it describes this situation as in progress at an atomic interval. This means that if the proposition with which the progressive combines doesn’t encode the aspectual profile of a process, it has to be coerced; the transition network illustrates

the various ways in which this can be achieved. To interpret a progressive state, the reader will search its context for a stable atomic interval. In narratives, this interval is typically provided by a preceding clause (the profile of which may have to be coerced to meet the antecedent requirements of the progressive). If this is not the case, the reader will single out an atomic interval on the time line under construction on the basis of pragmatic inferences.

Our analysis captures a number of different and sometimes apparently conflicting notions traditionally used to characterise the progressive form. Thus, the meaning of the progressive is often specified in terms of its continuous or durative aspect (e.g. Palmer 1965; Lyons 1968). This can be explained in the light of the aspectual characteristics of the process profile which progressives take as their input. The same characteristics allow us to account for other meaning components standardly associated with the progressive, such as limited or finite duration (Koenig 1980; Toolan 1983), incompleteness (Allen 1966), temporariness (Joos 1964, Goldschmidt & Woisetschlaeger 1982) and expectation of termination (Hornby 1949).

Our description of the functional nature of the progressive is also in line with the observation that progressives normally do not move narrative time forward (cf. Joos 1964: 127; Hirtle 1967: 66; Schopf 1974: 256; Weinrich 1977: 124). Because they normally interrupt the linear succession of events in a narrative, progressives are said to enhance a narrative's "temporal density": their capacity to "call attention more specifically to time" is invoked to distinguish them from event descriptions (which "speak of nothing but the action itself", Jespersen 1924: 180). Rather than advancing the plot, progressives are said to endow states of affairs with internal shape (hence their "slow cadence" in contrast with the "rapid cadence" of event descriptions, Hirtle 1967: 32).

Our description of the referential make-up of progressive states makes it possible to account for these observations. It also fits in with the fact that the principal effect of progressives is often characterised in terms of the temporal contour they assign to situations. And finally, it enables us to explain why progressives are often used to convey an intense point in a narrative, a moment of (temporarily heightened) awareness or concentration on the part of a character or a character's involved participation or immersion in what is going on; all of these characteristics relate to the fact that progressives are states and therefore introduce a perspectival focus.

4.5 The perfect

4.5.1 Functional characteristics

The functional nature of the perfect can be described in terms of the following characteristics. First, it takes as its input a proposition which includes reference to a culmination. Second, it shifts the assumed reference time of the proposition to the consequences associated with the culmination, which are conceived of as an extended interval. What these look like will be determined by the semantic content of the proposition, context and pragmatic inferences. And third, it introduces an atomic interval within these consequences at which they are asserted as being in force. As a result of this, the referential centre becomes asymmetrical. The perfect operator, in other words, coerces a proposition into a state. This can be represented schematically as follows:

Input:	(Prep. per.)	[C]	(Cons.)
		[r']	
		[r]	
or			
	[Prep. per.]	C]	(Cons.)
	[r']	
	[r]	
Output:			
		r'	
	(C) // // (Cons.) // //		
		[r]	

4.5.2 Culminations combining with a perfect

It follows from this that culmination propositions will unproblematically combine with a perfect, because their profile does not have to be coerced to meet the operator's input requirements. Consider:

- (4-52) He stepped to one side of the window, aware that he was visible to people he could not see. It had stopped raining, but the sound of water was louder. (McEwan, *The Child in Time*: 58)

The perfect makes salient whatever consequences can be associated with the culmination proposition *it stopped raining*. These consequences extend at both sides of a stable asserted

reference time, which is in this particular example provided by the previous proposition (which is coerced into a point). The lexical state which follows the perfect is assessed at its (stable) asserted reference time.

The asserted reference time of the perfect in example (4-53) is the same as that of the lexical state which precedes it (which has been provided by an event clause earlier in the text):

- (4-53) She lay curled up on her side of the bed, like a hare in its form. She had turned out the light [...]. (Woolf, *Lappin And Lapinova*: 26)

Example (4-54) also illustrates the stability of the asserted reference time relied on by a perfect—both the perfect state and the progressive state which follows it are assessed at the same atomic interval:

- (4-54) They had arrived at their front door; Diana was rummaging in her bag for the key. (Lively, *According to Mark*: 28)

The following examples show that perfect culminations introduce a perspectival focus which may be occupied by a subject in the text. In examples (4-56) and (4-57) other state descriptions in the same state complex are described from the same perspective:

- (4-55) But oh, how much had he lost? (Linklater, *The Merry Muse*: 137)
- (4-56) Of course, she had deliberately chosen Westminster Bridge. His flat was off Birdcage Walk. (Manning, *The Doves of Venus*: 7)
- (4-57) The further irony of all this was that in spite of her, he had turned out so well. In spite of going to only a third-rate college, he had, on his own initiative, come out with a first-rate education; in spite of growing up dominated by a small mind, he had ended up with a large one; in spite of all her foolish views, he was free of prejudice and unafraid to face facts. Most miraculous of all, instead of being blinded by love for her as she was for him, he had cut himself emotionally free of her [...]. He was not dominated by his mother. (O'Connor, *Everything That Rises Must Converge*: 12)

4.5.3 Culminated processes combining with the perfect

Culminated processes, too, can combine with a perfect operator without their profile having to be coerced first. Example (4-58) illustrates this:

- (4-58) (In the bathroom) her cosmetic bag has been emptied into the sink: tooth-brush, toothpaste, bottle of aspirin, the works. (Atwood, *Bodily Harm*: 158)

In (4-59), the asserted reference time at which the perfect is interpreted is the same as that at which the preceding states are assessed:³

- (4-59) The windows were open wide, the shutters put back, and the light glared in. She had thrown the carpets and the big white pillows over the balcony rails. (Mansfield, *The Man Without A Temperament*: 9)

In (4-60), the perfect and the progressive state are both assessed at the same asserted reference time:

- (4-60) The train had escaped from the ugly fringes of the city, and the soft spring landscape was gliding past her. (Wharton, *Atrophy*: 29)

The following examples illustrate that culminated processes which encode a perfect become perspectivally situated.

- (4-61) She felt as if her body had shrunk; it had grown small, and black and hard. (Woolf, *Lappin and Lapinova*: 26)
- (4-62) True, he had memorized a brace of resounding epigrams, so that he might leave some good 'last words' if he retained his consciousness till near the end; [...] (Linklater, *The Merry Muse*: 132)

4.5.4 Processes combining with the perfect

A proposition _____ which is not a culmination or culminated process can only combine felicitously with the perfect if it is coerced first. In the case of a process, this means the process is assigned a culmination and will thus have consequences associated with it. Example (4-63) illustrates this:

- (4-63) In it [the carriage] sat the General and the Countess; they had been for his daily airing. (Mansfield, *The Man Without a Temperament*: 13)

In (4-64) the semantic content of the perfect process (which, as in the previous example, is

³The third clause *the light glared in* constitutes a process, but here forms part of the state complex. This phenomenon was discussed in the previous chapter. Note that the relationship of topical/scenic coherence which can be detected among the first three states also extends to the perfect state.

assessed at the stable asserted reference time of the preceding state), constitutes a subjective interpretation of the fictional reality:

- (4-64) This was because she had used him, stolen from him. He
had gone searching for their daughter while she sat at home. (McEwan,
The Child in Time: 135)

4.5.5 Points combining with a perfect

Point propositions only encode a perfect felicitously if they can be viewed as having consequences (cf. the transition from point to culmination). If the semantic content of the proposition and world knowledge do not allow for the identification of any relevant consequences, this coercion will fail and the combination of the point proposition with the perfect auxiliary will be felt to be unacceptable. This is illustrated by the following example, used by Moens & Steedman (1988: 19):

- (4-65) #The star has twinkled.

In other cases, it may be possible to imagine a context which makes the transition from point to culmination plausible. Thus example (4-66)

- (4-66) Fred has hiccoughed.

could be felicitous in a context in which Fred's hiccoughing forms part of a particular scenario (e.g. in the framework of a play) and has to take place before the next event in a prearranged sequence can occur. In such a context, it will be possible to associate consequences with the point expression, and hence to coerce it into a culmination which may serve as input for a perfect operator.

4.5.6 Lexical states combining with the perfect

For lexical states to felicitously combine with a perfect it must be possible to associate consequences with them. This means, in principle, that the state has to evoke a contingency structure, or, in other words, that it has to be coerced via the transition path which maps non-contingent states (which include all stative basic propositions) onto contingent states.

The latter type of profile thus constitutes a third potential input category for the perfect operator.

As we have seen in the previous chapter, contingent states are characterised by the fact that their referential centre remains asymmetrical, which their asserted reference time is conceived of as a culmination. This means a number of different relationships may hold between the asserted and the assumed reference time. If a contingent state is placed in the consequences of a preceding description, its asserted reference time may, for example, coincide with the first moment of its assumed reference time (in which case the state is truly inceptive). Alternatively, it may be an interval at the beginning of the assumed reference time which is not its first moment (in which case the state is pseudo-inceptive). Or it may be an unspecified interval internal to the assumed reference time. The three possibilities can be represented schematically as follows:

- (1)
$$\begin{array}{c} [////////r'////////> \\ [r] \\ C \text{ (cons.)} \end{array}$$
- (2)
$$\begin{array}{c} [////////r'////////> \\ [r] \\ C \text{ (cons.)} \end{array}$$
- (3)
$$\begin{array}{c} <////////r'////////> \\ [r] \\ C \text{ (cons.)} \end{array}$$

In the case of perfect states, however, a fourth possibility applies: because consequences have to be associated with the actual occurrence of the state, the asserted reference time of the contingent state which serves as input for the perfect has to coincide with the final boundary of its assumed reference time, which therefore is to be conceived of as a culmination. This can be represented schematically as follows:

- (4)
$$\begin{array}{c} (l)////////r'///////// \\ [r] \\ C \text{ (cons.)} \end{array}$$

This means that, for a state to combine with a perfect, it must be possible to assign a final boundary to the state of affairs it describes, and to think of this boundary as a culmination

which has consequences associated with it.

Because the assumed reference time of a restrictive state is a segment on an imaginary time line, it is, in most cases, relatively easy to conceive of a restrictive state as bringing about a change of state. Example (4-67) and (4-68) describe that the consequences of a restrictive state are registered as being in force by a character in the text:

(4-67) She sees her notebook, laid out on the bed, with the material she's been collecting, maps and brochures, neatly beside it. Someone's been in here.
(Atwood, *Bodily Harm*: 158)

(4-68) Most of the men had been so thoughtful as to bring tweed caps, as well as their top hats [...]. (Linklater: *The Merry Muse*: 141)

In the case of most unrestrictive state profiles, on the other hand, it is much harder to construct a context which makes this meaning transformation plausible. It is impossible, for example, to envisage the state of affairs *be tall* as being restricted in time—hence the infelicitousness of (4-69):

(4-69) *John has been tall.

Contrast this with the temporary states in (4-70) and (4-71), which are perfectly acceptable:

(4-70) Vina has been ill.

(4-71) Claire has been productive.

And this is not surprising: since unrestrictive states describe a situation as intrinsic to the world, it is normally impossible to conceive of them as having consequences, because this would imply that the situation has come to an end. In narrative, however, there are instances in which it is possible to conceive of an unrestrictive state as having consequences. As we have seen, unrestrictive states apply without limitation over a narrative line. If this narrative line coincides with the whole of the imaginary time span of a narrative, an unrestrictive state combining with a perfect will be infelicitous. But an unrestrictive state may also apply over a shorter line—a particular period in the life of a protagonist which is viewed as having come to an end, for example. In such cases, it will be possible to assign a final boundary to the assumed reference time of the unrestrictive state, after which a new time line ensues. As a

result, it will be possible to associate consequences with the proposition and to assess them at some point on a later timeline—a protagonist might, for example, recall a situation which no longer holds, and consider it in the light of the fictional present. In such cases, a perfect will be felicitous.

The following example illustrates this:

- (4-72) Her life had been so carefully guarded, so inwardly conventional in a world where all the outer conventions were tottering, that no one had ever known she had a lover. (Wharton, *Atrophy*: 28)

The unrestrictive state *her life was so carefully guarded* applies over a timeline which covers an earlier stage in the female protagonist's life. At the point where this line comes to an end, consequences start to ensue and a new time line is introduced. The perfect construction describes these consequences as assessed at a particular moment on the time line which is being construed when the reader encounters the sentence. This moment coincides with the temporal co-ordinate of a character in the text: the sentence describes a situation in the past life of the female protagonist *as she reconstructs it*—it is shaped and coloured by the interpretative activity of her memory.

The following examples illustrate the same principle. As in the previous passage, the perfect states reflect the thoughts of a character in the text:

- (4-73) She saw time stretching like a shadow behind her, like the long, dark, empty promenade on which the two figures, very small in her memory, pressed against the wind. Her father had known that he was dying. (Manning, *The Doves of Venus*: 55)
- (4-74) And what a narrow-minded, self-centred, domestic tyrant she had been! (Linklater, *The Merry Muse*: 136)

Restrictive and unrestrictive states may thus be coerced into contingent states to serve as input for a perfect operator. Through a different route, however, their profile may also be changed into a culminated process before it combines with a perfect. This route goes via the process node, and, as in the case of progressive states, lexical states may be coerced in this way if it is possible to conceive of them appropriately. The state—process transition requires thinking of the original state profile as an overt or developing situation. This means the state's asserted reference time is to be protracted into an extended interval which coincides with its

assumed reference time (cf. the overt meaning component), which has to be an extended non-bounded interval on a time line. If context and world knowledge allow for this type of coercion, the resulting process can be assigned a boundary and serve as input for the perfect operator.

As in the case of the progressive, unrestrictive states often resist this meaning transformation because it is difficult to think of them as transient rather than permanent. If this is possible, however, they may felicitously combine with a perfect. Thus, it is not hard to construct a context in which somebody, registering another person's distress, exclaims:

(4-75) John has been a bastard again!

The perfect in this example once more constitutes a subject's (in this case the speaker's) *interpretation* of a given situation.

Restrictive states will as a rule be more conducive to being coerced into a process, because their assumed reference time constitutes a segment on a time line rather than the whole of a time line—a characteristic which they share with processes. Hence, they will more frequently combine with a perfect operator than unrestrictive states. To interpret the perfect in (4-76), for example

(4-76) Fido has been very good.

the state has to be conceived of as a developing situation (the transition from state to process; for example, Fido is good means Fido behaves himself). Once this is achieved, a final boundary can be assigned to the situation (the transition from process to culminated process), so that consequences can be associated with it (e.g. Fido deserves some praise). A context which allows this is easy to construct.

4.5.7 Temporally sequenced perfects

Let us summarise the main points of our discussion so far. A perfect takes as its input a situation type which evokes a contingency structure, and highlights the consequences associated with it at a stable, non-updated asserted reference time. Because of this perfects, like lexical

states and progressives, generally do not normally move time forward.

When a perfect follows or is followed by another state both states will be interpreted at the asserted reference time, which remains stable. No contingency structure is evoked, and the reader's attention will instead be geared towards the establishment of some kind of topical relationship between the states of affairs described. In such cases, the consecutive states form a state complex which is governed by the same perspectival focus. The following examples illustrate this:

- (4-77) The old stable block had become the sales area and three huge glasshouses had been built where once had been the kitchen garden. The rest was filled with aisle upon aisle of container-grown plants and trees, each area labelled with markers in elegant lettering designed by an art-school friend of Bill's: Shrub Roses, Fuchsias, Fruit Trees, Buddleias and so forth. (Lively, *According to Mark*: 33)
- (4-78) But the fall had shaken him, and one of his knees was sore. (Linklater, *The Merry Muse*: 12)
- (4-79) The raw white fog outside had been turned by the lamps into a golden mesh that blurred the edges of the plates and gave the pineapples a rough golden skin. Only she herself in her white wedding dress peering ahead of her with her prominent eyes seemed insoluble as an icicle. (Woolf, *Lappin and Lapinova*: 23-24)
- (4-80) The mourners, however, even the sturdiest, presented a less dignified appearance than they had worn ashore. Most of the men had been so thoughtful as to bring tweed caps, as well as their top hats [...]. (Linklater, *The Merry Muse*: 141)
- (4-81) At the sides of the room were shelves of the copper hunting horns and ewers and warming pans and horse-brasses that would be slung from the beams of pubs and restaurants. New brass handles, in eighteenth century designs, had been clapped onto old deal chests or tough functional little dressers; the painted carcass of a nineteenth century pram had been made into a plant-stand. (Lively, *The Road to Lichfield*: 178)

- (4-82) (He could not recall everything he had said to her.) Hoarse of voice and momentarily insane, he had muttered his suggestion to “cut and run”—that was a memory clothed in shame and stiff with remorse— but what promise had he made? A proposal to “cut and run” might be called an invitation, but certainly not a promise. He had spoken clearly of the difference between a phrase used to express gallantry, and words that embodied a serious purpose; but either she had forgotten that skillful explanation or was deliberately ignoring it. (Linklater, *The Merry Muse*: 182)
- (4-83) But for a quarter of a century he had lived with propriety, with a narrow subservience to convention—and a handsome profit for conformity. But oh, how much had he lost? (Linklater, *The Merry Muse*: 137)

The principle of interpreting perfects at a stable asserted reference time is, however, not without problems. Consider the following examples:

- (4-84) She had sketched into a notebook the tomb that bore so lavish a collection of trophies of war, and had written beneath her sketch “Decoration for a bed-head”, hoping that one day at the studio she would be required to decorate a bed-head. (Manning, *The Doves of Venus*: 4)
- (4-85) “Would you know him if you met him?” Diana had once asked. “If he appeared, walking towards you in the street.” And Mark had replied, after consideration that yes, he was pretty sure he would. (Lively, *According to Mark*: 60)

While the first perfect clause in each of these passages can be interpreted at a stable asserted reference time in the main line narrative, the second clause (*had written*, *had replied*) in each case creates the impression of temporal progression. This forward movement in time, however, is to be situated *not* at the first narrative level (at which the situation described in the first clause is situated) but at an embedded narrative level introduced by the first clause. In other words, while the asserted reference time of the first clause is provided by a stable atomic interval at the level of the main line narrative (a feature which characterises it as a state), it also introduces a new embedded narrative line. And on this line it is interpreted as an event, which provides the antecedent context for the following clause, which updates the embedded narrative line.

To capture this particular phenomenon, we will say that the first clause in each case introduces a new temporal *temporal focus*. A clause introduces a new temporal focus if it creates an embedded narrative line, and if its aspectual profile at the embedded narrative line differs

from the one on the main line narrative.

In each of the examples above the first clause is interpreted the level of the main line narrative as a state. The second perfect is contingently related to the first. However, it is not the perfect state which is made contingent but rather the proposition which served as input for the perfect. In the case of (4-85), this is a culmination; in (4-84), it is a culminated process. The contingency structure associated with this input profile is evoked, and the profile which served as input for the next perfect is placed in its consequences *at the level of the embedded narrative line*. In other words, within the embedded narrative line a contingency relation is made salient between the propositions which, on the embedded narrative line, behave as events in the simple past. The non-contingent meaning structure of the first perfect at the level of the main line narrative, meanwhile, is temporarily stacked. This can be represented schematically as follows:

(culmination)			(consequences)
(PP)	[C]	(cons)	/// / r' ///
	[r']		[r]
	[r]		
new temporal focus			stacked stable asserted reference time
			with non-contingent associated
			meaning structure

An important principle follows from this, namely that although aspectual profiles may be coerced by various operators, their earlier referential centres and associated meaning structures are not completely erased by this coercion, but remain present as underlying layers of meaning which may, under the appropriate circumstances, be reactivated. In the case of past perfect constructions the underlying layer of meaning (the input profile for the perfect) is usually an event; this event is coerced by the perfect into a state, and if it occurs in a stative context (as in examples (4-77)-(4-83)) the perfect will be contextualised as a state. However, if a contingency relation can be inferred between the semantic content of successive perfects, the reader will be invited to consider the event profile which has been preserved as underlying layer meaning as more salient, to reactivate it, and to interpret the sequence accordingly.

4.5.8 The present perfect

Note that only past perfects exhibit this capacity to introduce a new temporal focus and a new embedded time line. In the present tense, in contrast, consecutive perfects cannot be interpreted as contingently related and occurring in a time sequence. Consider example (4-86):

- (4-86) #“Would you know him if you met him?” Diana has once asked. [...] And Mark has replied, after consideration that yes, he was pretty sure he would.

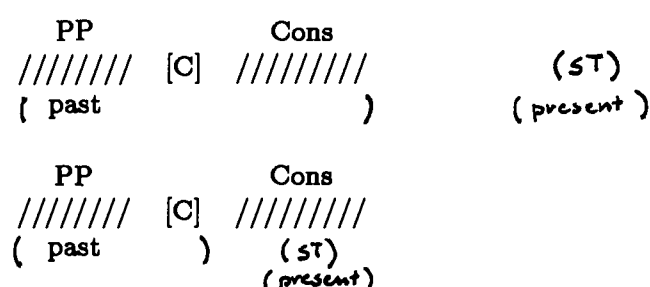
And this is not surprising. As we have seen earlier, to describe consecutive states as temporally sequenced and therefore as contingently related, they are to be thought of as including reference to a culmination. To evoke a time sphere before a past tense reference point (in other words, a pre-past), the language user has to select the past perfect. And to convey temporal sequencing within this time sphere, a contingency relation has to be made salient between states of affairs in the past perfect. To describe states of affairs as contingently related in a past time sphere, however, the language user does not need to use the present perfect, because she has the simple past at her disposal to express precisely this meaning. /p

Put differently, there are two ways of viewing the “pastness” of a state of affairs with respect to an imaginary speech point. The first consists in creating an internally coherent temporal continuum distanced from the speech point, in which states of affairs are described as recorded without interacting directly with the time sphere of the speech act. To evoke such a time sphere, a language user will select the simple past; and to convey temporal progression within this continuum, she will describe states of affairs as contingently related to each other. This means that they are thought of as including reference to a culmination, or change of state, and therefore as partaking of a chain of order and development with respect to surrounding events. This implies a procedure of *distancing* the states of affairs described from their (real or imaginary) speech point: the consequences of each state of affairs serve as antecedent locus for a subsequent state of affairs, which is also situated in the past, so that there is no immediate link between the speech time and the (asserted and assumed) reference time of the proposition.

In a Reichenbachian framework, these characteristics are captured by the requirement that

in the simple past speech time and reference time are separated ($E = R < S$).

A past tense situation can, however, also be considered in the light of the consequences that can be associated with it insofar as they are *still in force* at the utterance's (real or imaginary) speech time. This means that the contingency structure associated with the state of affairs described is not conceived of as a self-contained contingent sequence in the past, but as a sequence of contingently related states of affairs the consequences of which embrace (and possibly extend beyond) the speech point. Schematically this can be represented as follows:

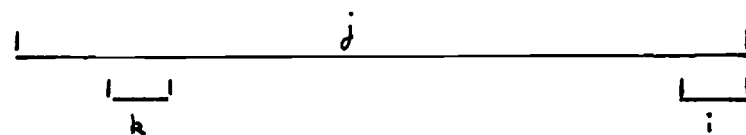


Accounts of the present perfect capture this idea by describing its principal meaning as covering a past-to-present period of time (e.g. Thomson and Martinet 1974). The same characterisation also pinpoints what the different and at first blush distinct uses of the present perfect listed by McCawley (1971, 1981) and Comrie (1976) have in common. The different categories McCawley and Comrie distinguish between can be summarised as follows:

1. the universal perfect or perfect of persistent situation (which indicates that a state of affairs prevails throughout some interval stretching from the past into the present)
2. the existential or experiential perfect (which indicates that an event occurred at least once in a period that extends from the past to the present)
3. the stative perfect or perfect of result (which indicates that the direct effect of a past event still holds, or that a present state is the result of some past situation)
4. the hot news perfect or perfect of recent past

The characteristic shared by all these uses of the present perfect is that they relate a past situation to its consequences as they are felt at the present moment—something which is captured graphically by our characterisation of the perfect in the figure above.

Interval-based accounts of the present perfect attempt to formalise a similar notion when they specify the relevant truth conditions for the present perfect as involving the identification of a large interval of which “now” is a final subinterval, with the stipulation that the state of affairs described in the present perfect is required to be true with respect to this larger interval (cf. Bennet & Partee 1972; Dowty 1979). A similar approach is adopted with respect to a homogeneous interval logic by Heny (1982) and Richards (1986), who define the present perfect as true with respect to some interval i if i is a final subinterval of some interval j , and the situation described is true with respect to some k , which is a non-final subinterval of j . Schematically, this can be represented as follows:



One of the problems with this kind of account is that it does not capture the fact that perfects are states and are assessed at an atomic rather than an extended interval. In our approach, this is incorporated by distinguishing between two parameters for the description of i (which we identify as the consequent state of k), viz. an asserted and an assumed reference time. Another problem is that in purely topological terms, the above definition (and also the one proposed by Dowty and Bennet & Partee) boils down to the stipulation that k precedes j , so that it is not immediately obvious what distinguishes the present perfect from the simple past. The above accounts try to remedy this by specifying a larger interval of which both the interval at which the perfect is assessed and that of the situation which it describes are to be part. But such a specification, it seems to us, is not sufficient to represent the relationship of contingency which holds between the past event and the present assessment of its consequences, and the corresponding notion that both belong not only to the same temporal sequence, but also to the same causally related episode. In the approach we propose, this is captured by invoking the notion of a contingency structure which embraces both the past and the present.

In contrast with a simple past clause, then, the asserted reference time of a present perfect clause coincides with its speech time: it is an atomic interval surrounded by the larger interval at which the consequences of a past situation are assumed to hold. In a Reichenbachian framework, this would be expressed by the stipulation $S = R$, and $E < S$. The English language

thus provides different grammaticalisations of the different ways in which past descriptions can be related to a speech point.

4.5.9 The past perfect

However, it is also possible to situate past descriptions with respect to a reference time different from that of the (real or imaginary) speech point. This means that, within a time sphere temporally distanced from the speech point, a reference point is introduced with respect to which a “pre-past” is located. As in the case of propositions which make reference to a past time sphere, propositions in a pre-past time sphere can be conceived of in different ways—either as partaking of a self-contained temporal continuum distanced from the reference point in the past time sphere (as in the case of the simple past), or as having consequences which are viewed as in force, and are assessed at, this reference point (as in the case of the present perfect). Unlike in the case of the simple past and the present perfect, however, language provides only one means of expressing both these meanings, namely the past perfect.

This is why, in contrast with the present perfect, a past perfect may be interpreted either in terms of the aspectual properties of its input proposition (which includes reference to a culmination) or in terms of those of its output profile (which consists of the consequences of the input category being assessed at a stable asserted reference time). Which of these possibilities applies depends largely on context. If a past perfect is sequenced with other states, it will be assessed at the same stable asserted reference time. In addition to this, any first occurrence of a past perfect will automatically be interpreted in first instance as a consequent state, and be assessed at a stable asserted reference time within the past tense narrative. The interpretation of a subsequent past perfect by the reader, however, will depend on her inferences concerning the type of coherence which governs the sequence: if a temporal/causal relationship can be detected between the two, the temporal focus will shift and, within the new embedded narrative line, both perfect constructions will effectively function as events.

The similarity between such sequences and simple past event sequences is borne out by the fact that such an embedded narrative line will often be continued in the simple past. The following example illustrates this:

- (4-87) At three o'clock one morning, she had rung for the night nurse and told her she couldn't sleep. The nurse gave her a pill; she swallowed it with some water, leaned back with a sigh, then had given a little yip of surprise and was gone. (Godwin, *A Southern Family*: 174)

After an embedded narrative line the meaning structure originally associated with the past perfect at the main line narrative (the asserted reference time of which is stable) which was temporarily made abstraction of, may be reactivated. Consider, for example, (4-88)

- (4-88) (1) This was because she had used him, stolen from him. (2) He had gone out searching for their daughter while she sat at home. (3) When he had failed to find her, Julie had blamed him (4) and left, her head full of cant about the proper way to mourn. (5) The proper way! (6) Who was she to lay down rules about that? (McEwan, *The Child in Time*: 135)

The clauses in this passage are all assessed at the same stable asserted reference time, so that they constitute a state complex, the perspectival focus of which is occupied by a character in the narrative. But within this complex a relationship of contingency can be detected between the consecutive past perfect constructions in (2) and (3); these consequently form an embedded narrative line within the complex, on which narrative time moves forward. As a result of this the temporal focus will temporarily shift. But when the reader encounters the state in clause (4), which has to be interpreted at a stable asserted reference time, the non-contingent meaning structure originally associated with clause (2) will be reactivated.

4.5.10 Conclusion

In conclusion, perfects are normally interpreted as states, and assessed at a stable asserted reference time situated within the consequences associated with the event profile which they take as their input. If a relationship of contingency can be perceived between two consecutive past perfects, however, the contingency structures associated with the events which serve as their input may be made salient as embedded temporal foci. The original temporal focus is stacked, and a new embedded narrative line is introduced. The original temporal focus, however, may be activated at a later stage.

4.6 Structural states

At the beginning of this ^hchapter we introduced a distinction between *restrictive* or *temporary* states, which apply over a segment on the time line under construction, and therefore imply that the state of affairs they describe came about and will come to an end at some unspecified point on that time line; and *unrestrictive states*, which apply without envisaged limitation over the whole of the time line under construction. Restrictive lexical states and progressives belong to the former group, unrestrictive lexical states to the latter. Perfect states may be interpreted either way.

In this section, we will introduce another subcategory of state profiles, which we will refer to as *structural states*. Structural states resemble unrestrictive lexical states in that their assumed reference time covers the whole of the time line under construction; unlike unrestrictive lexical states, however, they elicit this type of representation because their lexical-semantic profile has been coerced by a *structural operator*.

4.6.1 Functional characteristics

The functional nature of structural operators can be captured in terms of the following characteristics: they take as their input a point, and they map this point onto a time line by iterating it over this time line. The resulting output profile consists of an extended non-contingent interval (the time line onto which the point has been mapped) which is assessed at a stable atomic asserted reference time, and thus exhibits the aspectual properties of a state.

Structural states thus describe the repeated occurrence of a situation which is thought of as a point, as characteristic of, or intrinsic to, the structure of a time line.

This can schematically be represented as follows:

$$\begin{array}{c} r' \\ <///\square///\square///\square///\square///> \\ [r] \end{array}$$

In terms of the aspectual properties of their referential centre, structural states are identical to unrestrictive states. The difference between the two categories concerns the internal constituency of the time line which constitutes their assumed reference time. In the case of unrestrictive states, this time line is unstructured: the assumed reference time of the proposition coincides with the inferred (inert) extension of the state. In the case of structural states, it is the iterative applying of the point proposition which extends over the time line; the original, non-iterative proposition can only be assumed to obtain at the intervals implicitly or explicitly highlighted by the structural operator, which thus in effect assigns a particular structure to the time lines. This is why we characterise this category as *structural* states.

The type of proposition we refer to as structural states includes *frequentative*, *dispositional*, *normal*, and *customary states* (cf. Lyons 1977: 716), *iteratives* and *habituals*. We opt for the term *structural* because we feel it best reflects the property which we are trying to capture. For present purposes nothing important follows from not making any more fine-grained distinctions.

The transition path between points and structural states resembles the one between points and processes, in that its function consists in iterating a point proposition over an extended interval. There are, however, two crucial differences. First of all, structural operators map a point proposition onto a *time line*. Because of this, they describe the iteration as intrinsic to (an entity in) the world as it is viewed at the time at which the described state of affairs is asserted. And secondly, they describe this unrestrictive interval as assessed at an *atomic interval* internal to their assumed reference time; because of this, structural states lack the overt or developing quality which characterises processes.

4.6.2 Structural operators

Unlike the progressive and the perfect operator, which can be identified by the reader through the presence of one specific syntactic feature (viz. a progressive or a perfect auxiliary), the category of structural operators is more diverse and includes a variety of different sentence constituents.

Generally speaking, these constituents fall into two main groups. The first consists of *fre-*

quency adverbs (such as *twice a week*, *every Saturday* etc.), which specify the structure they impose on a timeline in terms of a particular number or pattern of occurrences. If such an operator applies, the point-like situation which served as its input is described in a characteristic or habitual light. The following examples, which all contain non-stative basic propositions which are coerced into a structural state by a frequency adverbial, illustrate this:

- (4-89) He always gulped down his first cup of coffee [...]. (Godwin, *A Southern Family*: 107)
- (4-90) Every year they took a different cook with them [...]. (Godwin, *A Southern Family*: 148)
- (4-91) Twice a year the octopus orchid flowered [...]. (Rhys, *Wide Sargasso Sea*: 17)
- (4-92) On her Saturday afternoon walks she came here [...]. (Manning, *The Doves of Venus*: 4)

The second group consists of *generic constituents*; they include bare plurals and mass nouns in various sentence positions, and generic uses of expressions such as *one*, *you* and *they*. The structural function of these is best explained in the light of their “non-countability” feature, which interacts with the referential properties of a proposition in such a way that the proposition also acquires this feature. This means that, when a clause contains a generic constituent, the situation it describes is no longer portrayed as a singular and therefore countable occurrence; instead, its repeated occurrence is presented as intrinsic to, and characteristic of, the whole of the time line it is mapped onto, without any further specification (in terms of an identifiable number of instances) of this implied iteration.

The following examples illustrate this. They also show that structural states, like other states, introduce a perspectival focus—in all of the following examples, this focus is occupied by a character in the narrative:

- (4-93) Did you take any precautions, they say, not before but after. (Atwood, *Surfacing*: 7)
- (4-94) But no, in European hotels, they left your coffee in a pot on your table, along with a pitcher of hot milk, and you refilled your own cup. (Godwin, *A Southern Family*: 107)
- (4-95) (Life was wonderful,) but men died. (Manning, *The Doves of Venus*: 4)

- (4-96) But it gave one something to do, packing, unpacking. (Drabble, *The Realms of Gold*: 7)

4.6.3 Points combining with a structural operator

Since structural operators require as their input a point they unproblematically combine with point propositions, as in the following example:

- (4-97) Because sometimes when Aggie was lying awake late on a Saturday night, listening for car doors closing, footsteps coming up the walk, low voices, and sometimes a long quiet before the front door downstairs opened and then clicked shut—sometimes despite herself Aggie felt a stab of envy, or worse, resentment. Not nice, that. Not generous, or loving. (Barfoot, *Duet for Three*: 200)

This example again illustrates the capacity of structural states to introduce a subjective perspective into a narrative.

In (4-98) the second sentence, which contains a point proposition coerced into a structural state, is assessed at the same asserted reference time as the structural state which precedes it:

- (4-98) Often they looked slyly at each other when people talked about rabbits and woods and traps and shooting. Or they winked furtively across the table when Aunt Mary said that she could never bear to see a hare in a dish [...]. (Woolf, *Lappin And Lapinova*: 22)

4.6.4 Culminations combining with a structural operator

When culminations occur in combination with a structural operator, they are to be conceived of as points, which involves making abstraction of the consequences normally associated with them. The following examples illustrate this:

- (4-99) She seldom addressed or, apparently, noticed people who wandered into the showroom. (Lively, *According to Mark*: 17)
- (4-100) Mrs Halloran's always wins [...]. (Brookner, *Look At Me*: 10)

(4-101) [...] sometimes in the hot hours of the early afternoon they fell asleep.
(Waugh, *A Handful of Dust*: 169)

(4-102) He always gulped down his first cup of coffee [...]. (Godwin, *A Southern Family*: 107)

4.6.5 Culminated process expressions combining with a structural operator

We earlier discussed two possible transitions paths from culminated processes to points: one goes via the process node (the culminated process is stripped of its culmination, and the resulting process is compressed into a point), the other one via the culmination node (the culminated process is stripped of its preparatory period, and the resulting culmination is no longer envisaged as evoking a contingency structure). But a closer look at the following examples reveals that neither of these routes applies when a culminated process is coerced into a structural state:

(4-103) Between customers in the evenings in her big chair in the front room, Aggie read novels and histories and textbooks. (Barfoot, *Duet for Three*: 136)

(4-104) Masses became mobs, which had their own rules. (Any revolution proved that). (Barfoot, *Duet for Three*: 136)

(4-105) Twice a year the octopus orchid flowered [...]. (Rhys, *Wide Sargasso Sea*: 17)

(4-106) They stick needles into you so you won't hear anything. (Atwood, *Surfacing*: 80)

In none of these cases, the culminated process is stripped of either its preparatory period or its culmination before it is compressed into a point; rather, the *whole* of their referential centre (which includes reference to both) is compressed into a point-like structure (which, once this has been achieved, no longer has consequences associated with it). In other words, to serve as input for a structural operator culminated processes are coerced into points via a direct transition path. This, incidentally, supports our earlier observation that the atomic structure of points should not be defined in ontological terms. When culminated processes are compressed into points they do not lose their internal complexity. It is more accurate to

say that when they are described in a general, characteristic or habitual light, the reader no longer thinks of them as composite entities which bring about a change of state.

4.6.6 Processes combining with a structural operator

When processes combine with a structural operator, their referential centre is coerced into a point by compressing their asserted and assumed reference time into an atomic interval. Again, this does not mean the process loses its extension, but rather that it is no longer described as such. The following examples illustrate this:

- (4-107) Sometimes Sally worries that she's a nothing, the way Marilyn was before she got a divorce and a job. (Atwood, *Bluebeard's Egg*: 138)
- (4-108) Some Sundays he spoke of the joys of heaven, the reward for goodness, the pure peace of it. Other days he spoke of hell, quite graphically. (Barfoot, *Duet for Three*: 124)
- (4-109) She read about other people's lives, how they managed and how they were seen to have managed. She read about ideas, and systems of ideas. (Barfoot: *Duet for Three*: 136)
- (4-110) [...] the foghorn sounded regularly through the rain. (Waugh, *A Handful of Dust*: 168)

4.6.7 Lexical states combining with a structural operator

For lexical states to meet the input requirements of a structural operator, it must be possible to think of the state of affairs they describe as a point. If it can be conceived of as such, it can felicitously combine with frequentative expressions, which will describe the repeated occurrence of the state as characteristic of the time line under construction. As in the case of processes and culminated processes, the extension of the state is in such instances preserved as an underlying meaning component; when the structural operator applies, however, this extension no longer constitutes the focus of the reader's attention, and the state will be thought of as a point-like entity.

Because *restrictive states* apply over a segment on a time line, it is often possible to compress their assumed reference time into a point. The following examples illustrate this:

(4-111) Suzanne Handley-Cox, fiftyish and of lacquered appearance, remained for the most part in her office where she intimidated young artists. (Lively, *According to Mark*: 17)

(4-112) (Most often June went downstairs to the Sunday school in the basement, but sometimes he let her stay with him, in the high-ceilinged, dark-pewed cool and quiet church part.[...]. It was hard to sit still during sermons, though. (Barfoot, *Duet for Three*: 96)

The last clause in (4-112) again illustrates that structural states may introduce a subjective perspective into a narrative.

Unrestrictive states, on the other hand, are not as a rule compatible with adverbs quantifying over times. This is due to the fact that the appropriate coercion would require that the whole of the time line which constitutes their assumed reference time is conceived of as bounded; in addition to this, the operator would describe this bounded time line as iterated over yet another time line. The oddity or unacceptability of the following examples demonstrates that such a procedure is normally felt to be impossible or nonsensical:

(4-113) *Three times a week, Chris is attractive.

(4-114) *Sometimes John is tall.

If an unrestrictive state does felicitously combine with a frequentative expression, this means a context can be constructed in which the described situation can plausibly be interpreted as temporary. This explains why the following examples are acceptable:

(4-115) Every so often, Nikki was happy.

(4-116) At regular intervals, Kitty is a redhead.

Unrestrictive states are, however, compatible with bare plurals and mass nouns:

(4-117) Elephants are clever.

(4-118) Moss is green.

In such cases, however, the iterative aspect which characterises structural descriptions is absent, and the original profile of the unrestrictive state is preserved rather than coerced.

The non-countability feature of the time line and that of the mass or bare plural constituent in such cases reinforce each other's meaning orientation, and the time line which constitutes their assumed reference time remains unstructured. Note that such unrestrictive states *can* combine with the adverbial *always*. In such cases, however, the adverbial does not have a frequentative or an iterative meaning, but an inert one, which again reinforces the aspectual structure of the basic proposition without coercing it:

(4-119) Violets are always blue.

4.6.8 Narrative lines

In the approach we propose structural states and unrestrictive lexical states are both characterised by the fact that their assumed reference time covers the whole of the time line under construction. In many instances the domain of this narrative line will coincide with that of the main line narrative as a whole, as in (4-120)

(4-120) The commonest kind of missing person is the adolescent girl, closely followed by the teenage boy. The majority in this category come from working-class homes and almost invariably from those where there is serious parental disturbance. There is another minor peak in the third decade of life, less markedly working class, and constituted by husbands and wives trying to run out on marriages or domestic situations they have got bored with. (Fowles, *The Enigma*: 189)

In other cases pragmatic inferences will determine how the reader views the extension of a narrative line. In this respect the identification of the state's perspectival focus and that of the subject which potentially occupies it may play a vital role. The structural states in the following passage, for example, can, through various contextual clues, be interpreted as assessed from the perspective of the main protagonist—a young boy—at a particular point in the story:

(4-121) The girls kept diaries, but you never had a chance to read them. They kept them locked away—Laura's in her top bureau drawer, Bess's in the secret compartment of her desk. Diaries, besides, had keys. Laura wore hers on a bracelet with other trinkets—a gold heart and a tiny ivory slipper. Bess kept hers pinned to the black silk lining of her everyday purse or sometimes under the strap of an evening gown. (Taylor, *A Woman of Substance*: 1)

The structural states in (4-121) thus portray characteristic elements of the fictional world as it is perceived by the boy. But although the domain of these states of affairs (their assumed reference time) covers a major part of the novel, it does not extend to parts of it which focus on the same male protagonist at a later stage in his life.

In other instances, the domain over which structural states apply may be demarcated through the use of a clause which puts a frame on their assumed reference time, as in the following example:

- (4-122) *All that week* the black boys lounged in the camp; sometimes they washed their clothes and hung them out on the gunwales of the boat to dry in the sun; sometimes they went fishing and came back with a massive catch, speared on a stick (the flesh was tasteless and rubbery); usually in the evenings they sang songs round the fire. (Waugh, *A Handful of Dust*: 176)

Narrative lines therefore need not coincide with the whole extension of a main line narrative. But whatever the implied or explicitly marked extension of the main or embedded time line under construction, structural and unrestrictive states all share the characteristic that they are assumed to obtain without limitation over the whole of this time line.

In the case of consecutive structural states, the time lines over which the states described are assumed to extend may be structured differently—that is, states of affairs may be described as iterated at different intervals. This, however, does not appear to be a problem as long as the asserted reference time of the clauses or sentences concerned remains stable. The following examples illustrate this:

- (4-123) Tony and Dr Messinger seldom spoke to one another, either when they were marching or at the halts, for they were constantly strained and exhausted. In the evenings after they had washed and changed into dry shirts and flannel trousers they talked a little, mostly about the number of miles they had done that day, their probable position and the state of their feet. They drank rum and water after their bath; for supper there was usually bully beef stewed with rice and flour dumplings. (Waugh, *A Handful of Dust*: 181)
- (4-124) [...] sometimes in the hot hours of the afternoon they fell asleep. (2) They ate in the boat, out of tins, and (3) drank rum mixed with the water of the river, which was mahogany brown but quite clear. (Waugh, *A Handful of Dust*: 169)

4.6.9 Unrestrictive state complexes

As we have seen earlier, consecutive states which are asserted of the same stable asserted reference time form a state complex. All the tensed clauses in a state complex are governed by the same perspectival focus. In addition to the structural operators discussed above, a state complex consisting of structural states and unrestrictive lexical states may function as a structural operator, in the sense that it coerces non-stative propositions and restrictive lexical states into structural states. The following examples illustrate this:

- (4-125) [ULS] The structure of the house was hierarchical, with my grandfather at the top, [ULS] but its secret life—the life of pie crusts, clean sheets, the box of rags in the linen closet, the loaves in the oven— was female. [P ▷ST] The house, and all the objects in it, *crackled with static electricity*. [P ▷ST] Undertows *washed through it*, [ULS] the air was heavy with things that were known but not spoken. (P ▷ULS) Like a hollow log, a drum, a church, it amplified [...]. (Atwood, *Significant Moments in the Life of my Mother*: 13)
- (4-126) [ULS] At the back of the Campo di Santa Maria Formosa was a network of streets and narrow gutter-canals, at high tide smelling like dead fish and at low tide even worse. [P ▷ST] The befouled water lapped at the lower doors of the tall buildings on either side; [UPS] but these doors had been closed for ever. [ULS] The entrances to the buildings were round the other side, in some narrow alley between the waterways. (Spark, *Territorial Rights*: 13)
- (4-127) [...] [ST] the foghorn sounded regularly through the rain. [P ▷ST] Tony prowled disconsolately about the deserted decks [P ▷ST] or sat alone in the music room, his mind straying back along the path he had forbidden it, to the tall elm avenue at Hetton and the budding copses. (Waugh, *A Handful of Dust*: 168)
- (4-128) [UPS] For my mother, hospitals have never been glamorous places [CP ▷ST] and illness offers no respite or holiday. [C ▷ST] “Never get sick,” she says, [RLS ▷ULS] and means it. [ST] She hardly ever does. (Atwood, *Significant Moments in the Life of My Mother*: 12)

(ULS = unrestrictive lexical state; P = process; ST = structural state; UPS = unrestrictive perfect state; CP = culminated process; ▷ indicates the coercion of a proposition’s aspectual profile)

In such cases, the unrestrictive state complex has an effect on non-stative propositions which

is similar to that of the present tense in a discourse context (which will be discussed in chapter 5).

4.6.10 Temporally sequenced structural states

Like other state profiles, structural states are normally interpreted at a stable asserted reference time, so that they do not introduce an update into a narrative.

Consider, however, the following example:

- (4-129) (1) Allan always brought a large crouete of foie gras, a delicacy of which he was particularly fond. (2) Everyone ate a great deal (3) and became slightly torpid towards Boxing-day evening; (4) silver ladles of burning brandy went round the table, (5) crackers were pulled and opened [...]. (Waugh, *A Handful of Dust*: 60)

The passage as a whole constitutes a state complex consisting of structural states, and none of the tensed clauses it contains moves time forward at the level of the main line narrative. Clause (3), however, *does* introduce an update with respect to clause (2).

The phenomenon concerned is essentially similar to the one discussed earlier with respect to the past perfect. Although normally a topical relation is made salient between consecutive structural states, sometimes a contingency relation between them may be prominent. This contingency relation, however, will not hold between the structural states (as we have seen, this would require a fairly complex procedure of conceiving of time lines as contingently related events) but between the events which are coerced by the structural operator (in example (4-129), *eat a great deal* and *become slightly torpid*). This means that, as in the case of the past perfect, the referential centre of the uncoerced basic proposition remains present as underlying layer of meaning and may be activated in an appropriate context.

If semantic content and pragmatic inferences highlight a contingency relationship between two consecutive propositions which combine with a structural operator, a new temporal focus is introduced and an embedded narrative line is constructed. The new temporal focus consists of the contingency structure associated with the first (uncoerced) event. The second (uncoerced) event is placed in its consequences and hence introduces a temporal update within the embedded narrative line.

At the same time the referential centre of the first coerced proposition (which, at the level of the main line narrative, functions as a structural state and is interpreted accordingly) is stacked. Again, however, it may be reactivated at a later stage, when the embedded narrative line is not expanded any further. Example (4-129) illustrates this: as it is more plausible to interpret clause (4) as topically related to clause (2) (and clause (1)) than as contingently related to clause (3), it will reactivate the meaning structure associated with the coerced structural state profile of clause (2).

Example (4-130) illustrates the same principle:

- (4-130) What nonsense to pretend that nowadays, even in big cities, in the world's greatest social centres, the severe old-fashioned standards had given place to tolerance, laxity and ease! You took up the morning paper, and you read of girl bandits, movie-star divorces, 'hold-ups' at balls, murder and suicide and elopement, and a general welter of disjointed disconnected impulses and appetites; then you turned your eyes onto your own daily life, and found yourself as cribbed and cabined, as beset by vigilant family eyes, observant friends, all sorts of embodied standards, as any white muslin novel heroine of the 'sixties! (Wharton, *Atrophy*: 28-29)

In the present tense, too, sequences of events may be portrayed as characteristic of the time line under construction in this way. Example (4-131) illustrates this:

- (4-131) They stick needles into you so you won't hear anything, [...] they bend over you, technicians, mechanics, butchers, students clumsy or sniggering practising on your body, they take the baby out with a fork like a pickle out of a pickle jar. (Atwood, *Surfacing*: 80)

Example (4-131) and (4-130) also illustrate once more that structural states are perspectivally situated and may be interpreted as reflecting the thoughts or opinions of a subject.

In conclusion, it is possible to portray not only events, but also *sequences of events* in a characteristic, habitual or general light. In such cases, time moves forward on an embedded narrative line but not at the level of the surface narrative.

4.6.11 Conclusion

When the reader encounters a proposition modified by a structural operator in a narrative she will, on the basis of pragmatic inferences, construct a time line over which the proposition

can plausibly be envisaged as iterated. This time line will be assessed at an atomic asserted reference time

Like other types of states, structural states introduce a perspectival focus, which may be inferred to be occupied by a subject in the narrative.

If a structural state is sequenced with other state profiles, it will normally be interpreted at the same stable asserted reference time. In the case of consecutive structural states, however, a contingency relation may be salient between states of affairs which are, through the structural operator, described in a general or characteristic light. In such instances, a new temporal focus and narrative line are introduced, on which the states of affairs described are situated as events. At the same time this narrative line as a whole (which includes the temporal order conveyed between the events described) will be portrayed in a structural light, and be interpreted as a state at the level of the main line narrative.

4.7 Combining operators

Finally, it is worth drawing attention to the fact that different operators may apply within the same tensed clause or sentence. Given the additional stipulation that they apply in a particular order, however, the co-occurrence of different operators can also be explained in the light of the analysis suggested here.

Operators apply in the following sequence:

1. the structural function
2. the progressive function
3. the perfect function

When a structural operator occurs in combination with a progressive operator, for example, the latter will coerce the output of the structural operator. Thus (4-132) presents a characteristic situation as temporary:

(4-132) Rosalind was always finding new qualities in him. (Woolf, *Lappin and Lapinova*: 21)

Interpreting (4-132) involves coercing the basic proposition it contains into a structural state, by mapping it iteratively onto a time line. The output proposition of the structural operator is then further coerced into a progressive, which means the unrestrictive state is converted into a restrictive one. This operation also appears to enhance the subjective dimension of the state: the implication seems to be that the limited duration assigned to the assumed reference time of the proposition is determined by a subject's speculative assessment of the extension of the state of affairs described. This explains why the meaning of *always* changes when it combines with a progressive. *Always* with the non-progressive means *invariably* or *on every relevant occasion* (in other words, its meaning is purely frequentative), whereas *always* with the progressive means (hyperbolically) *constantly* or *continuously* and refers to a situation which a specific subject (which in spoken discourse is always the speaker, but which in narrative may be either the narrator or a character in the text) does not expect to last permanently. Because of this the progressive, when it combines with a structural operator, adds to it overtones of emotive colouring, annoyance or puzzlement (cf. Mitchell 1986). The contrasts between the (a) and (b) sentences in the following examples illustrate this:

- (4-133) a He always makes fun of me.
b He is always making fun of me.
- (4-134) a Her mother always told her not to walk home alone in the dark.
b Her mother was always telling her not to walk home alone in the dark.

A proposition encoding both a structural and a progressive operator thus elicits the following representation:

$$\begin{array}{c} \text{r}' \\ \hline <//////> \\ \text{[r]} \end{array}$$

(output after the structural function has applied)

$$\begin{array}{c} \text{r}' \\ \hline (/////////) \\ \text{[r]} \end{array}$$

(output after the progressive function has applied)

If the sentence in (4-132) also contains^{ed} a perfect operator, the latter would assign a culmination to the assumed reference time of the progressive proposition, and describe any consequences which can be associated with it as holding at a particular point in time. Example (4-135)

(4-135) Rosalind had always been finding new qualities in him.

could therefore schematically be represented as follows:

$$(0///\square///\square///\square///\square///\square///[C] \overbrace{////////}^{r'} \\ [r])$$

(output after the perfect function has applied)

Thus, if the last operator to apply is a perfect one, the asserted reference time of the sentence as a whole coincides with the point at which the consequences of the proposition which it takes as its input are assessed. This is especially clear if a subjective perspective is introduced, as in the following examples:

(4-136) (Not that she was a woman to be awed by conventions. She knew she wasn't.) She had always taken their measure, smiled at them—and conformed. (Wharton, *Atrophy*: 29)

(4-137) Ah, how often he had said to Nora: "If I could have you to myself for a weekend at Westover [...]" (Wharton, *Atrophy*: 30)

(4-138) She had gone over their conversation so often that she knew not only her own part in it but Miss Aldis's by heart. (Wharton, *Atrophy*: 31)

If a progressive combines with a perfect auxiliary, it is coerced into a culminated process via the process node. Progressives, as we have seen, describe an overt and developing situation of finite duration as ongoing at a particular point in time. To felicitously encode a perfect, their asserted reference time first has to be protracted into an extended interval (the transition from state to process); if a culmination can be assigned to this interval, the coerced profile will meet the input requirements for the perfect operator.

Thus (4-139)

(4-139) Fabia has been cleaning the flat.

can be used felicitously to refer to the consequences associated with the progressive construction, i.e. with the ongoing process of cleaning the flat. Because of this, (4-139) need not imply that Fabia actually *finished* cleaning the flat, and the consequences described by (4-139) might include the observation that the flat has been turned upside down but isn't necessarily clean.

Example (4-140), on the other hand,

(4-140) Fabia has cleaned the flat.

describes the consequences associated with the the culminated process *clean the flat*, which includes reference to the culmination *finish cleaning the flat*; these consequences will normally, among other things, consist of the flat being clean.

To summarise, sentences containing different stative operators are best described as conglomerates of expanded propositions and their corresponding referential centres. This means that while such sentences will exhibit the aspectual characteristics of the last function to apply, the output profiles of any other operators they contain are preserved as underlying layers of meaning.

4.8 Conclusion

We have distinguished between five different types of states. All of these have a number of aspectual properties in common which can be characterised in terms of their referential centre: the asserted reference time of a state is always an atomic interval which forms part of its assumed reference time, which is therefore by definition extended. As we have seen in Chapter 3, all propositions exhibiting this type of referential centre introduce a perspectival focus. We have illustrated this by showing how all five types of states may present the state of affairs they describe as filtered through the awareness or evaluating consciousness of a subject in the narrative.

We have also pointed out that because of these aspectual properties states will normally be

evaluated at a stable, non-updated asserted reference time; as a result, the reader's search for coherence among successive states will be geared towards establishing a topical rather than a contingency relation between them.

In the next chapter we will provide further evidence for our claim that states are perspectively situated through an analysis of the way the present tense (with actual time reference) interacts with the different aspectual types.

Chapter 5

The Present Tense in Spoken Discourse

5.1 Introduction

In this chapter, we will discuss the use of the present tense with real or actual time reference in spoken discourse¹, and the way it interacts with different aspectual types. At first blush, this may not seem directly relevant to our principal object of investigation, which concerns the relationship between aspectual class and certain temporal and perspectival issues in narrative fiction (where tense never has actual time reference). We feel, however, that it bears directly upon the central argument put forward in this dissertation, since it provides further evidence for our claim that (main) clauses which exhibit a state profile are perspectivally situated.

The starting point for our discussion is that there are restrictions on the way the present tense, if it has actual time reference, combines with aspectual class: certain combinations are odd or unacceptable, others are less standard. We will explain this in the light of earlier observations about the way a subject's experience of time is represented linguistically.

¹Tense has real or actual time reference if it deictically relates a situation to its moment of speech. This means tense in narrative fiction² although it may simulate the deictic capacity of tense in spoken discourse when a pseudo speech-time is established in the text. We will come back to this in Chapter 6. In spoken language, the use of the narrative or historical present tense constitutes an example of a case where the present tense lacks actual time reference.

5.2 The present tense with actual time reference

Grammatical descriptions of tense which take spoken discourse as their norm usually echo Comrie's view that the present tense

in its basic meaning [...] invariably locates a situation at the present moment, and says nothing beyond that. [...] [It] refers only to the situation holding at the present moment. (Comrie 1985: 37)

Such a deictic-temporal definition of the present tense² essentially captures the fact that the present, if it has actual time reference, is always *someone's* present: its meaning can only be specified as relative to the temporal situatedness of the speaker—that is, to the time at which a sentence is uttered (the speech time). In a present tense utterance which has actual time reference the speech time is the time at which the state of affairs described is asserted to take place or obtain. In Chapter 3 we argued that when the asserted reference time of a proposition coincides with the temporal co-ordinate of a subject, it constitutes a *perspectival interval*. We also claimed that a perspectival interval always has to be *atomic*. We will now further substantiate this claim by showing that present tense utterances with actual time reference are only felicitous if their asserted reference time is atomic. We will call this the *necessary* condition or requirement imposed by the present tense.

In addition to this, we will argue that a state of affairs in a present tense utterance with actual time reference is normally also described from the *perspective* of the speaker. This implies that it is possible for a speaker to describe a situation in the time sphere of the present as *perspectivally distanced* from the speaker. This claim is not as paradoxical as it may sound if it is viewed in the light of our earlier observations between perspectival distance and the establishment of a time line. The establishment of a time line, we suggested, always involves a procedure of perspectival distancing, because it means that situations are thought of as discrete units which derive their position on the time line from their relationship with other states of affairs, rather than from their relationship with the speech time. Clearly this type of perspectival distance is inextricably related to the concept of *narrative*: the establishment

²Tense is defined as a deictic category if it is viewed in its capacity to relate a situation to the moment of speech. Dahl (1985: 25) refers to this as *absolute tense*, Comrie (1976: 5) describes it as (the establishment of) *situation-external time*.

of a time line is tantamount to the establishment of a *narrative context*, cf. Dahl 1985: 112), and always requires a measure of distance between speaker and statement. A situation in the present tense is perspectively distanced from the speaker, therefore, if the present is portrayed by the speaker as a time line on which the situation is projected.

Such perspectival distance is at odds with a subject's immediate and involved experience and/or assessment of states of affairs in the time sphere of the present, where situations are typically viewed as obtaining or being in progress as the subject contemplates or describes them. In terms of the analysis we propose, this means that the assumed reference time of situations in the present tense with real time reference is typically extended and unbounded, and that their asserted reference time typically does not include reference to a culmination, so that it is stable. Nevertheless it is possible to convey *temporal immediacy* while at the same time introducing an element of *perspectival distance* through the implicit construction of a time line—to view situations in the present, in other words, as a kind of narrative which unfolds as the situations are described. Because this type of description is contrastive, however, it is also felt to be non-standard.³ Because of this a non-contingent associated meaning structure and an extended assumed reference time (or, by implication, an asymmetrical referential centre) are not necessary conditions for a present tense utterance with actual time reference to be used felicitously. We refer to them as features which are *congenial* to the present tense.

On the basis of this we can distinguish between two types of utterances in the present tense with actual time reference: those which describe a state of affairs from the perspective of the speaker (i.e. extended states of affairs which are assessed at a non-contingent atomic interval, or states) and those which introduce a measure of perspectival distance between speaker

³This explains why narrative is typically associated with the past tense which, aside from its deictic capacity to introduce a *temporal distance* between the moment of speech and the described state of affairs, is also associated with perspectival distance, in very much the same way as the temporal immediacy of the present tense is associated with perspectival immediacy. It is worth pointing out, however, that as in the case of the present tense, a state of affairs in the past tense may be viewed either as perspectively distanced from the speaker, or as governed by the speaker's perspective. Thus

Elle [language] connaît deux sortes de passés: l'un qui est immédiatement mien, que je commente, comme tout ce qui vient à ma rencontre dans la situation de locution concrète où je me trouve; l'autre que le récit, à la manière d'un filtre, sépare de moi et distancie. (Weinrich 1973: 101)
[language has two types of past: one which is immediately mine, which I annotate, just like anything else that I find in my immediate environment; the other past, which narrative, like some sort of filter, distance[s] from me]

and statement (i.e. states of affairs which are assessed at an contingent atomic interval, or culminations). The rest of our discussion will follow this distinction.

5.2.1 Present time reference with speaker’s perspective

State profiles

It follows from our discussion above that states meet the necessary requirement of the present tense and also exhibit its congenial characteristics. This is in line with/supports our claim that states are always perspectively situated. The following diagram captures this:

	Present tense	Referential make-up of state profiles
Necessary requirement	<i>r</i> is atomic	<i>r</i> is atomic
Congenial feature	RC is asymmetrical associated meaning structure is non-contingent	RC is asymmetrical associated meaning structure is non-contingent

As a result of this the present tense in the majority of cases combines with a proposition exhibiting a state profile—that is, a lexical, progressive, perfect or structural state. In sequence, present tense state propositions are interpreted at the same stable asserted reference time (which coincides with their the speech time), and a relationship of topical coherence is made salient between them. If subject-oriented constructions occur in such propositions they reflect the point of view of the speaker. The perspectival focus of state propositions in the present tense, therefore, is always occupied by the speaker.

The following examples illustrate all this:

- (5-1) Fabia is furious and to be honest I am furious too.
- (5-2) I like horseriding. Unfortunately I get very little practice.
- (5-3) It is raining again! And all my washing is outside!

(5-4) Marc gets to go to Paris quite often. He's so lucky.

(5-5) Sophie has just arrived. Tomorrow she's going to Aberdeen.

Process profiles

The asserted reference time of propositions exhibiting a process profile is an extended interval. Because of this process propositions can only combine with the present tense if their meaning profile is coerced.

Consider the following examples:

(5-6) Henry drinks a lot. (We all worry about him).

(5-7) Ewan works in the garden. (He enjoys it.)

(5-8) We do push-ups in the park. (It keeps us in shape).

Due to the conflict between the extended asserted reference time of the process profile and the atomic reference time required by the present tense it is impossible to interpret a process proposition in the present tense with actual time reference as describing an overt and developing process: to meet the temporal requirements of the present tense, the asserted reference time of the proposition has to be atomic. To achieve this, the process profile is to be coerced into a state. The only stative interpretation which can be assigned to a simple form (if it is not a lexical state) is a structural one. We have seen earlier that a simple form is coerced into a structural state if it combines with a frequentative adverb, a generic, or a mass noun or bare plural—in other words, with a *structural operator*. In a context in which tense has actual time reference, we can now add, the present tense, when it combines with a process profile, also functions as structural operator, in the sense that it imposes a habitual or characteristic interpretation on the state of affairs described. The transition from process to structural state, as we have seen in Chapter 4, goes via the point node.

All this can schematically be represented as follows:

	Present tense	Process	Structural state
Necessary requirement	<i>r</i> is atomic	<i>r</i> is extended	<i>r</i> is atomic
Congenial feature	RC is asymmetrical associated meaning structure is non-contingent	RC is symmetrical associated meaning structure is non-contingent	RC is asymmetrical associated meaning structure is non-contingent

If a process profile is coerced into a state by the present tense, it becomes perspectivally situated, and its perspectival focus is occupied by the speaker. The following examples illustrate this:

(5-9) Jo smokes too much.

(5-10) Stefana works out with admirable discipline and devotion.

Culminated Process profiles

Now let us consider culminated processes in the present tense. Since their asserted reference time is extended, culminated processes cannot combine with the present tense unless their aspectual profile is coerced. This is illustrated by the following sentences which, as basic propositions, would constitute culminated processes. In the present tense with actual time reference, none of them can be interpreted as culminated processes:

(5-11) Anja feeds the cat. (She loves animals).

(5-12) Henk makes a good curry. (But it takes him ages.)

(5-13) Robert cleans the flat. (We all appreciate it.)

As in the case of processes, there is a conflict between the asserted reference time of culminated processes (which is extended) and the type of asserted reference time required by the present tense. Because of this culminated processes can, like processes, only be used felicitously in the present tense if they are interpreted as structural states. In terms of the transition network this means they are first coerced, via a direct route, into a point, which is then coerced into a structural state.

This can be represented schematically as follows:

	Present tense	Culminated Process	Structural State
Necessary requirement	<i>r</i> is atomic	<i>r</i> is extended	<i>r</i> is atomic
Congenial feature	RC is asymmetrical associated meaning structure is non-contingent	RC is symmetrical associated meaning structure is contingent	RC is asymmetrical associated meaning structure is non-contingent

Culmination profiles

The case of culminations is different yet again. Because their asserted reference time is atomic culminations meet the necessary requirement of the present tense, and therefore can combine with it without being coerced first. On the other hand the assumed reference time of culminations is also atomic, which makes their referential centre symmetrical (*r* and *r'* coincide), and their associated meaning structure is contingent (*r* is a culmination). For a culmination to be described from the speaker's perspective, therefore, it also has to be coerced into a structural state (via the point node in the transition network). The following examples illustrate this:

(5-14) Ailsa comes in through the back door. (She has the key.)

(5-15) Nicky says she hates cooking. (But she often asks us over for a meal.)

(5-16) Anna kicks the cat. (It makes me angry.)

This can be represented schematically as follows:

	Present tense	Culmination	Structural state
Necessary requirement	<i>r</i> is atomic	<i>r</i> is atomic	<i>r</i> is atomic
Congenial feature	RC is asymmetrical associated meaning structure is non-contingent	RC is symmetrical associated meaning structure is contingent	RC is asymmetrical associated meaning structure is non-contingent

Point profiles

Because point propositions are interpreted at an atomic asserted reference time, they meet the necessary requirement of the present tense. Moreover, their associated meaning structure is non-contingent, so that they exhibit one of the perspectival features congenial to the present tense. However, their assumed reference time is atomic rather than extended, and this, as we have seen earlier, is not in accordance with the way a subject typically experiences time: although a perspectival interval—the time interval at which a subject registers or contemplates states of affairs—is felt to be atomic, the states of affairs registered or contemplated by a subject are typically experienced as extending.

Points, we have pointed out earlier, rarely occur as propositions—their significance in terms of the network lies primarily in the fact that they constitute an important node for transition paths. Their rare occurrence can be explained in the light of their referential properties. While their referential centre is atomic and symmetrical, it is also non-contingent. This is slightly puzzling because it is difficult to think of an atomic (and therefore bounded) interval as not bringing about a change of state. In the case of other non-contingent profiles this difficulty does not arise. Processes are extended, and can therefore be thought of as unbounded. Their role consists in furnishing descriptive details, so that their non-contingent nature is functional. The asserted reference time of states, on the other hand, constitutes a perspectival interval—i.e. a moment of perception or cognition. It is easy to think of such a moment as not bringing about a change of state: the relevance of states lies in their descriptive/perspectival function. Point propositions, however, demarcate a discrete interval on a time line which, like events, is bounded and perspectivally non-situated. Unlike events, however, points are not significant enough in terms of the narrative development to bring about a change of state—they are, in a sense, trivial events. Hence their rare occurrence in narratives.

In spoken discourse an uncoerced point proposition in the present tense would describe a punctual event, which does not bring about a change of state, as coinciding with the speaker's report of it. This is improbable for the following reason: if a speaker describes present tense situations as bounded units, she will in effect be constructing a narrative line in the present (cf. below). This means every situation which is being reported will be viewed as contributing to the rapidly unfolding dramatic development. Conceiving of bounded situations as non-

consequential—i.e. as points—would, in such a context, be inappropriate.

To describe a point proposition from the speaker’s perspective, therefore, it is, like other non-stative profiles, to be coerced into a structural state. The network shows this can be achieved via a direct route.

This can be represented as follows:

	Present tense	Points	Structural states
Necessary requirement	<i>r</i> is atomic	<i>r</i> is atomic	<i>r</i> is atomic
Congenial feature	RC is asymmetrical ass. meaning structure is non-contingent	RC is symmetrical ass. meaning structure is non-contingent	RC is asymmetrical ass. meaning structure is non-contingent

Example (5-17) illustrates this:

(5-17) (Guy has terrible table manners.) He burps. He hiccoughs. (And he tells terrible jokes.)

5.2.2 Present time reference without speaker’s perspective

Culmination propositions, we have seen in the previous section, meet the necessary requirements of the present tense, because they are asserted at an atomic interval. Because of this they can occur in the present tense without being coerced. If they do, however, they make available consequences for subsequent reference, so that their asserted reference time is not stable. Because of this they do, in sequence, convey the impression of forward movement in time: they describe “what happens” as with each new clause or sentence a change of state takes place. Thus a narrative context is constructed within the discursive context. As we have seen earlier, this implies a procedure of perspectival distancing.

At the same time each new asserted reference time coincides with the temporal awareness of the speaker. The perspectival distance conveyed by such sequences convey is therefore combined with the temporal immediacy of the present tense: a state of affairs is reported as a fact, but its occurrence coincides with the speaker’s perception of it. In other words, both temporal immediacy and perspectival distance are maintained at the same time: events are

synchronised with the speaker's report of them. One consequence of the fact that perspectival distance is not complemented with temporal distance (as in the case of past tense narrative) is that contingency relations between successive states of affairs are considerably weaker than in the past tense, because they are subordinated to the focalising presence of the speaker.⁴

Because of the contrastive procedure it implies this use of the present tense is felt to be *marked* or *non-standard*. Descriptive grammars label it the *instantaneous* or *punctual* use of the present tense. It is associated with scenarios where both the rapid unfolding of action and the mediating presence of a speaker are crucial, such as sport commentaries and demonstrations:

(5-18) Napier passes the ball to Jeffreys, who misses it and slips!

(5-19) I open the cage and here comes the rabbit!

Because they combine the unrolling of events with temporal immediacy, such descriptions often yield a distinct theatrical effect, or carry strong overtones of excitement and dramatic build-up.

Leech (1971) points out that

in most of these cases, the event probably does not take place *exactly* at the instant when it is mentioned: it is subjective rather than objective simultaneity that is conveyed. (Leech 1971: 3)

This observation is completely in line with our analysis.

States of affairs in the punctual or instantaneous present always exhibit a culmination profile. Both points and culminated processes, however, can occur in a context in which events unroll simultaneously with the speaker's speech acts, provided they are thought or conceived of as culminations. In the case of points, this means the situation is to be assigned consequences. Example (5-20) illustrates this

(5-20) He opens the cage. He winks. And out come the rabbit!

⁴The past tense, in contrast, will reinforce the anaphoric organisation of a narrative, because its time sphere is independent of the time sphere of the speaker.

Culminated processes, on the other hand, are to be compressed into a point first (the transition from culminated process to point), so that their asserted reference time can be viewed as coinciding with the speech time.⁵ This culmination is subsequently assigned consequences. The following example illustrates this:

- (5-23) He walks to the other side of the room. He takes the cage. He opens it.
And out comes the rabbit!

Conclusion

A state of affairs in the present tense, if it has actual time reference, is always asserted at the speech point, which is always an atomic interval. Because of this only state and culmination propositions can be used felicitously in the present tense (if it has actual time reference) without being coerced. Moreover, the use of the present tense is typically associated with a subjective perspective, namely that of the speaker. Because of this the referential centre of present tense utterances with actual time reference is normally asymmetrical (r and r' do not coincide) and non-contingent (r is not a culmination). The use of present tense culmination propositions is therefore non-standard (or marked) and limited to very specific contexts.

All this can schematically be represented as follows:

⁵This illustrates once more that we are not concerned with an ontological analysis, but with an analysis of the ways in which a given situation may be viewed or described. Thus, although a culminated process is extended, it may be thought of as atomic if it is described as occurring simultaneously with the speaker's report of it. Of course, this requires that it must be plausible to think of the culminated process as more or less coinciding with its report (which is again thought of as atomic, although it would clearly have some duration in real world terms). Thus it is hard to construct a context in which (5-21)

- (5-21) He paints a picture.

could be interpreted as a culmination in the present tense, because of the elaborate nature of the type of activity involved. But for (5-22)

- (5-22) He draws a circle.

an appropriate context could be much more easily constructed.

	present tense with actual time reference		
Necessary requirement:	temporal immediacy <i>r</i> has to be atomic		
Congenial feature	perspectival immediacy RC asymmetrical AMS is non-contingent		
	states RC asymmetrical AMS non-contingent perspectivally situated	culminations RC symmetrical AMS contingent perspectivally distanced	points RC symmetrical AMS non-contingent pragmatically implausible

5.3 Conclusion

We have shown in this chapter that the present tense with real time reference imposes restrictions on the aspectual interpretation of propositions: because it makes reference to the time of a speaker, only state profiles are both felicitous and unmarked. To free an utterance from these restrictions, it has to be *distanced* from its speaker. There are two ways of achieving this. The first consists in making reference to a time sphere in the speaker's past. And the second consists in lifting the utterance into an imaginary time sphere, so that it becomes a *story*. Thus, while the sequence in (5-24a) is infelicitous if it has actual time reference (because it is impossible to think of the states of affairs described as occurring simultaneously with their being reported), it is acceptable if it is recontextualised into an imaginary time sphere. And (5-24b) is acceptable even if it has actual time reference, because it encodes the past tense:

- (5-24) a Jack writes a short story and submits it to a contest.
b Jack wrote a short story and submitted it to a contest.

In both cases, an element of *distance* is introduced between the speech point and the statement. In the case of a past tense with actual time reference this distance is a *deictic/temporal* one. In the case of an imaginary present or an imaginary past the time sphere of the statement exhibits an *indeterminate* relationship with the speech point. In such instances the deictic status of the actual speech point is no longer relevant for the statement, and the speaker assumes the role of a *narrator*.

Although both the present and the past tense, if they have real time reference, essentially

situate a state of affairs temporally with respect to its speech point, the temporal immediacy of the present tense is normally associated with perspectival immediacy and the temporal distance of the past tense is typically associated with perspectival distance. This is illustrated by the following examples:

- (5-25) a John walks home from work (and goes jogging in the weekend).
 b Han does push-ups in the park. (It keeps him in shape.)
- (5-26) a John walked home from work (and collapsed in front of the TV).
 b Han did push-ups in the park (and went home to cook dinner.)

When the first clause in the (a) sentences above is encountered in isolation the cognitive agent will be inclined to interpret it as a structural state, and to contextualise it in an environment of topically/thematically related states of affairs. The first clause in the (b) sentences, on the other hand, will intuitively be interpreted as an event which makes available consequences for subsequent event reference.

But these connections between temporal and perspectival distance or immediacy are not rigid: temporal immediacy may be combined with perspectival distance (as in the case of the instantaneous present) and temporal distance may be combined with perspectival immediacy (as in the case of topically related stat-propositions in the past tense).

Because narrative, as a genre, is associated with the ordering of situations with respect to each other on a time line (which implies a procedure of distancing), it is typically also associated with the past tense (which establishes a temporal distance between speaker and statement).

The fact that situations in the present tense if it has actual time reference are described as states unless they are perspectively distanced from the speaker provides further evidence for our claim that states are perspectively situated and always introduce a perspectival focus.

In narratives, the perspectival focus introduced by states may be occupied by the text's narrator, but also by a(nother) participant in the story, or an anonymous observer. In the next chapter I will discuss how the reader, upon encountering a state in a narrative, will attempt to identify who occupies its perspectival focus on the basis of intrasentential^{١٤} and contextual information combined with pragmatic inferences.

Chapter 6

Perspectival Markers in Narrative Fiction

6.1 Introduction

We have argued in this dissertation that perspectival refractions in narrative fiction—the sensations of involvement or distance a narrative creates throughout the reading process—are not only brought about by expressive or subject-oriented elements: the *aspectual properties* of sentences, we have tried to show, also serve as markers of perspective. We have captured these aspectual properties in terms of two contrasts: that between a contingent and a topical meaning structure, and that between a symmetrical and an asymmetrical referential centre.

In this chapter, we will integrate these claims into a more general account of perspective in narrative fiction. First of all, we will turn our attention to an important perspectival dimension of narratives which we have virtually ignored so far, namely the relationship between the narrator and the story. If this relationship can be described as a deictic-temporal one (the narrator relates situations as they obtain or unfold in her presence, or recalls them as they have occurred in her presence), the narrator is *personalised*. If the relationship between narrator and story is temporally indeterminate, the narrator is *non-personalised*. In the former case the narrator typically refers to herself by means of a first person pronoun, in the latter case she typically does not. We will show how the relationship between narrator and story affects perspective; in the same context we will also discuss the perspectival function of *tense*.

In addition to this, we will try to specify which information contributes to the reader's interpretation of perspectival foci introduced by perspectivally situated sentences. We have already pointed out that a perspectival focus may be occupied by various individuals, such as the text's narrator, a character in the narrative, or an anonymous observer. The aspectual type of a sentence as such does not furnish the reader with any information as to who occupies a perspectival focus. We will discuss how the reader, upon encountering a state, will attempt to identify which individual occupies the perspectival focus which is introduced by the state, on the basis of intrasentential information, contextual information and pragmatic inferences. We will also show why the identity of a perspectival focus may remain ambiguous.

Before addressing these issues, however, we will provide a summary of the main points of our argument.

6.2 Aspectual markers of perspective

6.2.1 Narration vs description

In our discussion of the relationship between aspect and perspective we have, first of all, introduced a distinction between sentences which create the impression of forward movement in time (or *narration*) and sentences which do not (*description*). The concept of narration, we have pointed out, is crucial to narrative because it encapsulates what is felt to be quintessential to narrative as a genre. Indeed, what distinguishes narrative from non-narrative discourse is the fact that in narrative

the speaker relates a series of real or fictive events in the order (in which) they are supposed to have taken place. (Dahl 1985: 112)¹

Banfield (1982) relates narrativity in this sense to the notion of *telling time*:

[...] to narrate is to recount (in French, *raconter*), to tell. In French, its product is a conte or, sometimes, a *compte rendu*; in English, a tale (like a tally). Etymolog-

¹A similar definition is proposed by, among others, Forster (1962: 6); Rimmon-Kenan (1983: 2); Prince (1982: 179).

ically, all these terms contain the notion of counting, of enumeration, a vestigial meaning of which can still be invoked in phrases like “all told”, “to tell time”, “to tell one’s beads”. A “teller” can mean either a story-teller or a counter, one who reckons. (Banfield 1982: 264)

To construct a narrative, and hence a time line, situations are to be portrayed as discrete countable entities which can be related to each other in terms of causality, enablement, and development. We have argued that states of affairs are presented in this way if the time at which they are asserted includes reference to a *change of state*, or a *culmination*, after which consequences ensue. Thus the relationship between two sentences which constitute a narrative sequence is not merely one of temporal ordering—it is also characterised by a dimension of enablement or causality. We have used to term *contingency* to denote this dimension.

Sequences of sentences in narrative thus constitute narration if they can be contingently related to each other—that is, if the propositions concerned exhibit a *contingent profile*. Culminations, culminated processes and contingent states are contingent. Clearly not all sentences in a text have to exhibit a contingent profile for the text to constitute a narrative. However, some degree of narration is required throughout a narrative to sustain the reader’s capacity to keep conceptualising a time line.

Sentences which *describe*, in contrast, do not create the impression of forward movement in time. This, we have argued, is due to the fact that their asserted reference time does not include reference to a change of state. Sentences do not propel time if they exhibit a *non-contingent profile*. Points, processes and (non-contingent) states are non-contingent.

The relevance of the distinction between narration and description for the perspectival issues we are concerned with lies in the fact that highlighting a contingency relation between states of affairs, so they are to be ordered with respect to each other on a time line, introduces an element of perspectival distance between the narrator and the statement.

6.2.2 Perspectively situated vs perspectively non-situated sentences

In addition to this, we have made distinction between sentences which introduce a perspectival focus (or perspectively situated sentences) and sentences which do not (perspectively non-situated sentences). We have argued that if the aspectual properties of a sentence can be represented in terms of an *asymmetrical* referential centre, the sentence is perspectively situated. This means both contingent states and non-contingent states are perspectively situated. If the referential centre of the proposition is *symmetrical*, it is perspectively non-situated. Thus culminations, culminated processes, points and processes are all perspectively non-situated.

We have also pointed out that although contingent states are perspectively situated, that their perspectival status is contrastive. This is due to the fact that their asserted reference time exhibits a characteristic normally associated with perspectival distance (it is conceived of as a culmination) while their referential centre as a whole incorporates the characteristics of a perspectively situated proposition. In the majority of cases, however, perspectively situated sentences constitute description. This means that they exhibit a non-contingent state profile, and that their asserted reference time is stable.

We will now look at some other factors which contribute to perspectival refractions in narratives fiction.

6.3 Other markers of perspective

In Chapter 1 of this dissertation we already referred to a commonly made distinction between *personalised* and *non-personalised* narrators. If the reader encounters a first person pronoun in a narrative text outside the context of direct quotation, and the referent of this pronoun is a participant in the story told, the reader will construct a *personalised narrator*.

This means two time spheres are automatically constructed: that of the narrator's present (i.e. the time sphere of the imaginary speech act), and that of her past. Hence a pseudo-speech time is established within the text, and tense, while it loses its deictic-temporal capacity with respect to any actual speech time, is recontextualised as a deictic category within the

internal system of the text. The present tense in narratives with a personalised narrator thus establishes present time reference within the referential framework of the narrative, while past tense utterances will be interpreted as constituting memory, or recall, on the part of the personalised narrator. In present tense narratives with a personalised narrator, therefore, the asserted reference time of each new state of affairs coincides with the (textually established) pseudo-speech time: the referential context of the (imaginary) speech act and that of the story coincide. In past tense narrative with a personalised narrator, the referential context of the (imaginary) speech act and that of the story are separated.

The fact that a narrator is personalised obviously has perspectival repercussions: it elicits a sense of involvement, or empathy, in the reader, who will instinctively be inclined to identify with the narrator. But the establishment of a personalised narrator also imposes restrictions on who may occupy perspectival foci: a personalised narrator only has access to what she herself sees, feels, or experiences, or has seen, felt, or experienced at some point in the past.

Thus in a present tense narrative with a personalised narrator, the narrator (in the referential context of the imaginary speech act, which coincides with that of the story), constitutes the only possible subject-of-consciousness for sentences which introduce a subjective perspective. This means perspective cannot be represented, but is always directly presented. In past tense narratives with a personalised narrator there are two potential subjects of consciousness: the narrator (in the context of the speech act, which is separated from that of the story) and the "past self" of the narrator, as a participant in the story. As a result of this perspectival foci become potentially ambiguous, and perspective may be both presented (the perspectival focus is occupied by the narrator) or represented (the perspectival focus is occupied by the narrator's past self).

If a narrator is not personalised, i.e. if she does not participate as character in the story told, tense loses its deictic/temporal capacity with respect to the narrator's imaginary speech time. In such cases, the time sphere of the narrative is indeterminate and truly "imaginary".

This, too, has perspectival repercussions. Because there is no longer a direct connection between the narrator's referential context and that of the story, there are, in principle, no longer any restrictions on point of view. In narratives without a personalised narrator, therefore, perspectival foci may in principle be occupied by the narrator, by a participant in the

narrative, or by an “anonymous observer”).

It is worth pointing out that a narrator may refer to herself in the first person even if there is no clear connection between her referential context and that of the narrative reality. This is typically the case in nineteenth century novels with an *overt narrator* who comments upon the narrative. Despite the selection of the first person pronoun, such narrators are not personalised as a character in the fictional world—something which is most clearly borne out by the fact that they are typically omniscient. The relationship between such overt narrators and the referential context of the story therefore remains indeterminate.² If a non-personalised narrator presents herself as “overt”, she obviously becomes a salient potential subject-of-consciousness.

In general, the function of tense in narratives with a non-personalised narrator is reduced to a *perspectival* one—the past tense introduces an element of perspectival distance in the narrative, while the present tense conveys perspectival immediacy.

As we have seen in Chapter 1, the presence of *subject-oriented features* also constitutes a marker of perspective: if a sentence contains subject-oriented features it is *subjective*, and has to be interpreted with reference to a subject-of-consciousness.

Let us recapitulate. Sentences the aspectual profile of which can be represented in terms of an asymmetrical referential centre introduce a perspectival focus, while sentences with a symmetrical referential do not. But this aspectual marker of perspective interacts with other perspectival markers which introduce additional perspectival refractions. These include the type of relationship that holds most saliently between consecutive sentences (contingent vs topical), the relationship between the time sphere and the referential context of the imaginary speech act and that of the story (established chiefly through the choice of person and tense), and the presence or absence of subject-oriented features.

Because of this the opposition between perspectivally situated and perspectivally non-situated sentences can be situated on a continuum which reflects how the perspectival status of a sentence established through the relationship between its asserted and its assumed reference

²The relationship between a non-personalised narrator and the story thus resembles the one between an author and the narrative text as a whole, while that between a personalised narrator and the story is more akin to that between a locutionary agent and utterances with actual time reference.

time may be reinforced or modified by other perspectival markers.

At one pole of this continuum, we find contingent perspectively non-situated sentences (or events) in a past tense narrative which does not contain any subject-oriented features, and the narrator of which is not personalised. In sequence, such sentences create an illusionary, but internally coherent, temporal continuum of states of affairs recorded "in themselves", without interacting with the time sphere of their (imaginary) speech act, and independent of any subjective viewpoint.³ This mode of presentation is often felt to constitute narrative *par excellence*.

At the other pole of the continuum, we find topically related perspectively situated sentences in a present tense narrative which contains subject-oriented features and the narrator of which is personalised. If this mode is adopted the narrative is geared towards the expression of the perceptions, opinions or beliefs of a narrator who assumes the role of a subject-of-consciousness.

Between the two poles we find sentences exhibiting perspectival characteristics which are in some way contrastive. Present tense narration, for example, presents perspectively non-situated states of affairs as non-contingent, thus establishing two kinds of perspectival distance. Yet at the same time it does not complement this with the perspectival distance conveyed by the past tense, suggestive as it is of "hindsight"; through the selection of the present tense an element of perspectival immediacy is introduced instead. As a result of this present tense narration

[...] constantly pushing us along, leaves no leisure for thinking about why; it hustles us into a new *now*. The present, in this case, never becomes a past, a

³This is precisely what Barthes captures in his description of the French preterite:

Its function is no longer that of a tense. [...] Through the preterite the verb implicitly belongs with a verbal chain, it partakes of a set of related and interrelated actions, it functions as the algebraic sign of an intention. Allowing as it does for an ambiguity between temporality and causality, it calls for a sequence of events, that is, for intelligible Narrative. This is why it is the ideal instrument for every construction of a world: it is the unreal time of cosmogonies, myths, History and novels. [...] Behind the preterite there always lurks a demiurge, a God or a reciter [...] So that finally the preterite is the expression of an order, and consequently of euphoria. (Barthes 1967: 36-37)

thing we can keep and look into. (Lee 1923: 176)

Because of this perspectival contrast present tense narration is felt to be more “unusual” than past tense narration (where the perspectival effect of tense and aspect mutually reinforce each other), and its effect tends to be described as both *vivid* and *alienating*.

In present tense narration with a personalised narrator, the narrative suggests that states of affairs unfold simultaneously with the temporal awareness of the narrator. But this is clearly mere pretence—if only because otherwise a narrative in the present tense with a personalised narrator could never cover a time span significantly longer than the amount of time it takes to read the text. The suggested synchronicity between states of affairs and their report, in other words, is not subject to the restrictions imposed by the present tense on utterances which have actual time reference (the “instantaneous present”). In the historical present, extended intervals *can* be projected on the time line constructed, so that culminated process and process propositions occur without having to be coerced into states first.

If states of affairs are described as subjective in a past tense narrative, or in a narrative with a non-personalised narrator, their subject-of-consciousness, because of the distance which is introduced between the referential context of the narrator and that of the story, becomes potentially ambiguous. This means perspective may be *represented*.

6.4 Perspectival refractions in perspectivally situated sentences

Sentences which portray a state of affairs as perspectivally non-situated, it follows from our discussion in the previous section, may convey varying degrees of perspectival distance. This can be represented schematically as follows:⁴

⁴The case of perspectivally non-situated sentences with subject-oriented features will be discussed separately further down.

Perspectivally non-situated sentences	
General feature: no perspectival focus is introduced	
Further perspectival distance established through	Perspectival immediacy established through
• contingency (narration)	• topical coherence (description)
• past tense	• present tense
• non-personalised narrator	• personalised narrator

In this section we will illustrate this through some examples.

1. Perspectivally non-situated narration (events).

General feature: the absence of a perspectival focus is reinforced by contingency.

1. Present tense (perspectival immediacy)

- Personalised narrator (perspectival immediacy)

(6-1) I cook the hamburgers and we eat and I wash the dishes in the chipped dishpan, Anna drying; then it's almost dark. I lift the bedding out from the wall and make up our bed. (Atwood, *Surfacing*: 38)

- Non-personalised narrator (perspectival distance)

(6-2) He bends down. He kisses her. He tucks her in, he smooths the pillow. (Mansfield, *The Man Without A Temperament*: 19)

2. Past tense (perspectival distance)

- Personalised narrator (perspectival immediacy)

(6-3) He put his head round the door just after six, and nodded, and I picked up my bag and went out to join him. (Brookner, *Look At Me*: 125)

- Non-personalised narrator (perspectival distance)

(6-4) He went over to the washstand and dipped his fingers in water. (Mansfield, *The Man Without A Temperament*: 19)
[Maximally distanced narration]

2. Perspectivally non-situated description (points and processes)

General feature: the absence of a perspectival focus not reinforced by contingency. Topical coherence is suggestive of perspectival immediacy.

1. Present tense (perspectival immediacy)

- Personalised narrator (perspectival immediacy)

(6-5) [...] my breath knots, my body tightens against it; the water fills my mouth [...]. (Atwood, *Surfacing*: 13)

- Non-personalised narrator (perspectival distance)

(6-6) Beyond the window a car starts up, an aeroplane passes overhead. (Lively, *Moon Tiger*: 207)

2. Past tense (perspectival distance)

- Personalised narrator (perspectival immediacy)

(6-7) The sun blazed out and steam rose from the garden behind us. (Rhys, *Wide Sargasso Sea*: 58)

- Non-personalised narrator (perspectival distance)

(6-8) She trembled with strength as they struggled. The dust puffed round her shoes and his scuffling toes. (Gordimer, *Is There Nowhere Else Where We Can Meet?*: 19)

6.5 Perspectival refractions in perspectivally situated sentences

Perspectivally situated sentences may exhibit varying degrees of perspectival immediacy, depending on how they interact with other perspectival markers. In this section, we will illustrate this by means of some examples.

As we have seen earlier, perspectivally situated sentences always introduce a perspectival focus. A perspectival focus will be inferred to be occupied by the narrator if the narrator is personalised and the narrative is in the present tense: in such cases, there is not sufficient perspectival distance for perspective to be represented. In all other cases, perspectival foci are, at least in principle, ambiguous. If the perspectival focus introduced by the states or state complexes in the following examples is unambiguously occupied by the narrator, we have added this in square brackets. If the perspectival focus is potentially ambiguous, we have specified the individual most likely to occupy it (again in square brackets) and added a question mark.

1. Perspectivally situated narration (contingent states)

General feature: a perspectival focus is introduced, but at the same time an element of perspectival distance is maintained through the highlighting of a contingency relation between the sentence and the sentence which precedes it.

1. Present tense (perspectival immediacy)

- Personalised narrator (perspectival immediacy)

(6-9) (I unlatch the gate), the chicken wire walls are around me. (Atwood, *Surfacing*: 172) [Perspectival focus (PF): narrator]

- Non-personalised narrator (perspectival distance)

(6-10) [...] (a piece of cliff, of the solid world which evidently is not so solid after all, shifts under her clutching hand... crumbles...) and she is falling thwack backwards on her shoulders, her head, her outflung arm. (Lively, *Moon Tiger*: 98) [PF: ?female protagonist]

2. Past tense (perspectival distance)

- Personalised narrator (perspectival immediacy)

(6-11) (We mounted, turned a corner), and the village was out of sight. (Rhys, *Wide Sargasso Sea*: 58) [PF: ?narrator's past self]

- Non-personalised narrator (perspectival distance)

(6-12) [...] (wobbling, frantic, she climbed over the fence.) And she was out. (Gordimer, *Is There Nowhere Else Where We Can Meet?*: 98) [PF: ?female protagonist]

2. Perspectivally situated description ((non-contingent) states)

General feature: a perspectival focus is introduced. Topical coherence adds an additional element of perspectival immediacy.

1. Present tense (perspectival immediacy)

- Personalised narrator (perspectival immediacy)

(6-13) Sometimes I wish it were different. I wish I were beautiful and lazy and spoiled and not to be trusted. (Brookner, *Look At Me*: 19) [PF: narrator]

- Non-personalised narrator (perspectival distance)

(6-14) (Claudia hesitates. She walks quickly down to the wreckage.) The man is lying face down. His hair is fair, his tin hat lies beside him, part of his head is in black bloody shreds, the sand too is blackened, one leg has no foot. (Lively, *Moon Tiger*: 98) [PF: ?Claudia]

2. Past tense (perspectival distance)

- Personalised narrator (perspectival immediacy)

(6-15) (I watched them, assessed with absolute detachment what I was doing.) I was their mother and I was deserting them. I was taking the money that would have been theirs. (Barfoot, *Gaining Ground*: 95)
[PF: ?narrator's past self]

- Non-personalised narrator (perspectival distance)

(6-16) Still, there was no mockery coming from his gaze. Soft. It felt soft in a waiting kind of way. He was not judging her—or rather he was judging her but not comparing her. Not since Halle had a man looked at her that way: not loving or passionate, but interested, as though he were examining an ear of corn for quality (Morrison, *Beloved*: 25) [PF: ?female protagonist]

6.6 Identifying perspectival foci

Various factors play a role in the reader's interpretation of the perspectival focus introduced by a state. In this section, we discuss the most important ones.

6.6.1 Narrator's identity and tense

As we have seen earlier, in present tense narratives with a personalised narrator the perspectival focus introduced by a state will always be inferred to be occupied by the narrator, so that states are always interpreted as subjective: perspective is presented directly, and states are interpreted as narrator's *discourse*. Subject-oriented features reinforce this impression, but need not be present for a state in this type of narrative to be interpreted as subjective.

In first person narratives in the past tense, two potential individuals may occupy a perspectival focus: the narrator (by which we mean the narrator in her own time sphere, which is always the present) or the narrator's past self. The fact that in first person narratives only the narrator or her past self serve as potential subjects-of-consciousness is, as we have pointed out, due to the pragmatic restrictions inherent to a first person point of view, which is by definition limited. Only consciousness (i.e. perception, thought, emotion, judgement etc.), however,

is subject to this restriction; speech, clearly, is not. If sentences in past tense narratives with a personalised narrator are interpreted as represented speech they are interpreted with respect to a third person subject- of-consciousness. The procedure for its identification is similar to that followed in the identification of subjects- of-consciousness in narratives with a non-personalised narrator outlined further down.

Represented speech aside, the perspectival focus of states in past tense narratives with a personalised narrator always has to be occupied either by the narrator or by the narrator's past self.

In narratives with a non-personalised narrator, a perspectival focus is more ambiguous: it may be occupied by the narrator (as we have seen, this is most likely if the narrator is overt), a character in the story, or an anonymous observer. In the former case, the perspectival focus is occupied by a subject-of-consciousness. In the latter case the sentence is perspectivally situated but not subjective—the individual which occupies its perspectival focus is not a subject-of-consciousness.

To determine who occupies the perspectival focus introduced into a narrative with a non-personalised narrator, the reader will rely on various types of information. The most important ones are the presence (or absence) of subject-oriented features, and the presence (or absence) of perspectival clauses in the surrounding discourse.

6.6.2 Subject-oriented features

To establish the identity of a perspectival focus in a narrative with a non-personalised narrator, the reader will look for subject-oriented features either within the sentence or within the state complex it forms part of. If no such features can be found, and the perspective is external (i.e. the sentence describes what can be perceived from the outside), the perspectival focus will be inferred to be occupied by an *anonymous observer*. The following examples illustrate this:

(6-17) Loulou is in the coachhouse, wearing clay. She's wearing a pair of running shoes, once white, now grey, over men's wool work socks, a purple Indian-print cotton shirt, and a rust-coloured smock, so heavy with clay dust it hangs on her like brocade, the sleeves rolled up past the elbow. (Atwood, *Loulou*: 61) [PF: ?anonymous observer]

(6-18) [...] there was a dull stare in her eyes, whose gaze was fixed away off yonder on one of those patches of blue sky. It was not a glance of reflection, but rather indicated a suspension of intelligent thought. (Chopin, *The Story of an Hour*: 83) [PF: ?anonymous observer]

In both of these examples, the states contain descriptive details which cannot be perceived by the protagonist in the scene. If states describe what can be perceived by a character in the story, the perspectival focus becomes more ambiguous, and hovers between the neutral position of an anonymous onlooker and the subjective situatedness of the protagonist concerned. Example (6-19) illustrates this:

(6-19) The servant girl was in their room, singing loudly while she emptied soapy water into a pail. The windows were open wide, the shutters put back, and the light glared in. (Mansfield, *The Man Without A Temperament*: 71) [PF: ?male protagonist; ?anonymous observer]

If a state contains no subject-oriented features but the perspective is internal, the perspectival focus may be occupied either by the narrator or by the character who can be inferred to know, think or contemplate what is being described. The following passage, which describes a fantasy of one of the protagonists in the short story concerned, illustrates this:

(6-20) He was King Lappin; she was Queen Lapinova. They were the opposite of each other; he was bold and determined; she wary and undependable. He ruled over the busy world of rabbits; her world was a desolate, mysterious place, which she ranged mostly by moonlight. All the same their territories touched; they were King and Queen. (Woolf, *Lappin and Lapinova*: 22) [PF: ?narrator; ?female protagonist]

If the state or state complex contains subject-oriented features, and can therefore be inferred to be occupied by a subject-of-consciousness, the reader will try to determine the identity of this subject-of-consciousness on the basis of contextual information and pragmatic inferences. We will come back to this in section (5.7) below.

Thus subject-of-consciousness of the perspectival focus which governs the state complex in (6-21) is most plausibly identified as the text's narrator:

- (6-21) Frederick is so charming and so attractive that women forgive him for his little treacheries. Where others would meet censoriousness Frederick tends to invite collusion. His reputation precedes him, for that is reputation's only useful function. In this, perhaps, he finds the justification for his behaviour. (Brookner, *Family and Friends*: 19)
[PF: ? (non-personalised) narrator]
- (6-22) Six women and three men. The times being what they are, it is not possible to determine occupation, let alone class, by people's dress. The women wear jeans, or long skirts of an Indian cotton in bright colours that, a few years back, would have been regarded as more suitable for bedspreads. They have long hair, for the most part, and look as though they have cultural or artistic connections- work in art galleries, perhaps, or small publishing houses, or in interior decoration. In fact they are a dentist's receptionist, a librarian, two teachers and two married women whose occupation is precisely that. (Lively, *Next to Nature, Art*: 7)
[PF: ?(non-personalised) narrator]
- (6-23) There was nothing particularly recondite about his careless endearments, which we had all grown used to; somehow, though, he managed to make one feel as if those 'Darlings' (Darling Fanny, Darling Olivia, Darling Delia) might one day be invested with significance. He seemed to prepare an atmosphere of affection for himself [...]. He was, or seemed to be, totally ignorant of the sad compromises and makeshifts, the substitutions and the fantasies, that constitute the emotional baggage of the average person. (Brookner, *Look At Me*: 38) [PF:?(personalised) narrator]
- (6-24) She was fond of all boys' plays, and greatly preferred cricket not merely to dolls, but to the more heroic enjoyments of infancy, nursing a dormhouse, feeding a canary-bird, or watering a rose-bush. Indeed she had no taste for a garden; and if she gathered flowers at all, it was chiefly for the pleasure of mischief—at least so it was conjectured from her always preferring those which she was forbidden to take.— Such were her propensities—her abilities were quite as extraordinary. (Austen, *Northanger Abbey*: 37)
[PF: ?(non-personalised) narrator]

In the following examples, it is more plausible to infer that the perspectival focus is occupied by a character in the text different from the narrator:

- (6-25) The boy was about fourteen and tall and big for his age, he had a white skin, a dull ugly white covered with freckles, his mouth was a negro's mouth and he had small eyes, like bits of green glass. Worst, most horrible of all, his hair was crinkled, a negro's hair, but bright red, and his eyebrows and eyelashes were red. (Rhys, *Wide Sargasso Sea*: 41)
[PF: ?child protagonist]

- (6-26) But no, in European hotels, they left your coffee in a pot on your table, along with a pitcher of hot milk, and you refilled your own cup. And there were waiters, with towels on their arms, at the Kaiserin Elisabeth. (Godwin, *A Southern Family*: 107) [PF: ?female protagonist]
- (6-27) He hadn't realised his son had been so handsome. Why was that? Was it the more formal way they'd combed his hair, parted at the side and revealing his high forehead? He looked older this way, more his real age. (Godwin, *A Southern Family*: 155)
- (6-28) Claudia snuffs Lisa out—drains the colour from her cheeks, deprives her of speech or at least all speech to which anyone might pay attention, makes her shrink an inch or two, puts her in her place. The other Lisa is not like that. The other Lisa, the Lisa unknown to Claudia, is positive while not assertive, is prettier, sharper, a good cook, a competent mother, an adequate if not exemplary wife. She knows now that she married too young too quickly the wrong man, but has found ways of making the best of the situation. (Lively, *Moon Tiger*: 60) [PF: ?Lisa]
- (6-29) Well, it's perfectly obvious that's what she's done. The smell. Oh God (a prayer, not a blasphemy), what next. This is too much. This is out of the question, beyond everything. (Barfoot, *Duet for three*, 5)
[PF: ? (third person) protagonist]

6.6.3 Perspectival sentences

The reader's speculations concerning the identity of the subject-of-consciousness which occupies a perspectival focus also be affected by the presence of a *perspectival sentence* in the immediate context of the state. In Chapter 3, we already defined a *perspectival sentence* as sentence which contains a *perspectival verb*. Perspectival verbs include:

- verbs of speech and thought (*say, exclaim, think, wonder, ...*)
- perception verbs (*see, hear, ...*)
- predicate-adjective constructions with psychological adjectives (be *delighted, happy, jealous, scared, ...*)
- psychological action verbs (*smile to oneself, gasp, wince, ...*)
- action verbs, especially those which introduce a deictic angle into the discourse (*come inside, arrive, ...*)

If a state or state complex is preceded (or, in rare cases, followed) by a perspectival sentence, the semantic subject of the latter will often be identified as subject-of-consciousness of the state or state complex. The following examples illustrate this:

- (6-30) (He hears her stirring). Does she want something? (Mansfield, *The Man Without A Temperament*: 18)
- (6-31) (Charles stared at her). This was his daughter, speaking to him. His daughter. (Oates, *Wild Saturday*: 138)
- (6-32) (He laughed and shook his head): He *knew*... Good Lord, *exactly* like - (Gordimer, *The Soft Voice of the Serpent*: 24)
- (6-33) (Her heart gave a plunge.) Was the woman actually taking her upstairs to his room? (Wharton, *Atrophy*: 32)
- (6-34) ([...] and her stomach churns.) Are they having a row? If they are not having a row that is possibly even worse. (Lively, *Moon Tiger*: 49)
- (6-35) (She forced herself to lie down again.) The room was freezing but such air was good, it cleared the senses. (Oates, *Wild Saturday*: 106)
- (6-36) (She wandered back into her room.) Why was she up here?... Was she supposed to get something? (Oates, *Wild Saturday*: 116)
- (6-37) (Aggie nods, although June is turned away from her.) How thin June is, especially from the back. It's almost possible to make out her shoulder blades and the stepping stones of her spine, not to mention her ribs, beneath her dress. (Barfoot, *Duet for Three*: 250)
- (6-38) ([...] she lifted her hand to her face and sniffed): yes, it was as she remembered, not as chemists pretend it in the bath salts, but a dusty green scent, vegetable rather than flower. It was clean, unhuman. slightly sticky too; tacky on her fingers.] (Gordimer, *Is There Nowhere Else Where We Can Meet?*: 18)
- (6-39) (She admitted, when he revealed that he knew about the children's stories, to a general literary ambition.) She was trying to write a novel, it was so slow, you had to destroy so much and start again. (Fowles, *The Enigma*: 224)

The state complexes in all of the above examples contain one or more subject-oriented features and are therefore interpreted as subjective irrespective of the perspectival sentence which precedes it. In other words, the perspectival sentence contributes to the identification of

their subject-of-consciousness. If a perspectival sentence is sequenced with a state or state complex which does not contain any subject-oriented features, however, it will often highlight its subjective mimetic potential. The following examples illustrate this:

- (6-40) (She raised her hand [...] and smoothed her hair); it was wet at the hairline. (Gordimer, *Is There Nowhere Else Where We Can Meet*: 20) [PF: ?female protagonist]

- (6-41) (Then the boy saw the buck.) It was coming down the ridge, as if it were walking out of the very sound of the horn which related its death. It was not running, it was walking, tremendous, unhurried, slanting and tilting its head to pass the antlers through the undergrowth. (Faulkner, *Go Down Moses*: 69) [PF: ?the boy]

- (6-42) (Claudia hesitates. She walks quickly down to the wreckage.) The man is lying face down. His hair is fair, his tin hat lies beside him, part of his head is in black bloody shreds, the sand too is blackened, one leg has no foot. (Lively, *Moon Tiger*: 98) [PF: ?Claudia]

6.6.4 Pragmatic inferences

In the previous section we saw that the reader will often be inclined to identify the subject-of-consciousness of a state or state complex as the semantic subject of a neighbouring perspectival sentence. This option, however, may be rejected in favour of another potential subject-of-consciousness on the basis of pragmatic factors.

One possible restriction on the selection of a subject-of-consciousness obviously concerns the fact that its identification has to make immediate contextual sense. Thus in (6-43)

- (6-43) (Caroline poured coffee for her.) In the morning light Caroline's face was kindly, but marred with wrinkles. It was a human face, aging. A man had loved that face, had rubbed his own against it for twenty years, and had abandoned it for another face. And now what? A woman, abandoned, meticulous at pouring coffee out for her niece, her trim body bound up in an expensive woollen robe [...] (Oates, *Wild Saturday*: 111)

it would clearly be nonsensical to attribute the observations in the state complex to the semantic subject of the sentence which precedes it. Similarly in (6-44)

(6-44) ("You look a little tired, dear.") Suddenly she was tired, yes. But she hated these adults with their observations, seemingly so casual, running her through. (Oats, *Wild Saturday*: 110)

the semantic content of the state complex cannot plausibly be assigned to the character who utters the previous sentence.

To account for the reader's capacity to reject potential subjects-of-consciousness and to give others a higher degree of plausibility, we assume that throughout the reading process the reader constructs and continuously expands a number of *belief spaces*, which form part of a knowledge base type entity, and which contain information about the beliefs of potential subjects-of-consciousness in the narrative (which include the text's narrator, characters, and, potentially, more abstract entities such as particular ideological viewpoints), plus the reader. These beliefs take the form of propositions.

A more detailed discussion of the concept of belief spaces can be found in Rapaport (1986) and Wiebe & Rapaport (1987), where it is applied to general reference resolution in narratives. The relevance for our discussion lies in the fact the reader, in the process of the text, stores textual information in belief spaces, and that the content of these spaces will play a role in assigning a subject-of-consciousness to states or state complexes. If the perceptions or observations described by a state or a state complex are to be plausibly attributed to a particular character, they have to be in line with the reader's construction of the character's belief space at that particular point in the text. This consideration will obviously affect the interpretation of the subject-of-consciousness of the state complexes in examples (6-44) and (6-43,) where the the teenager protagonist becomes the most salient individual to occupy the perspectival focus.

Another relevant pragmatic factor concerns the overall structure of the text in which the sentence occurs. If a character has functioned as subject-of-consciousness at earlier stages in the text, there is a higher plausibility that it will do so again. If various characters have been identified as subject-of-consciousness, the character which was most recently singled out as subject-of-consciousness for a represented perspective will be most the most salient individual to occupy a current perspectival focus. And finally, a *quantitative effect* applies: if a particular character has been identified as subject-of-consciousness significantly more frequently than others, or even exclusively, it will be the most prominent individual to occupy a current

perspectival focus.

6.7 Perspectively non-situated states of affairs and subject-oriented features

Finally, it is worth drawing attention to a phenomenon which we have not considered so far. Although subject-oriented elements occur, in the majority of cases, in sentences exhibiting a state profile (or perspectively situated sentences), they may, in rare instances, occur in sentences which exhibit a non-stative profile, or perspectively non-situated sentences. Consider, for example:

(6-45) Then he shook hands with that good fellow his host, who had quite as much wine as was good for him. (Woolf, *The Years*: 287)

(6-46) She [...] saw in the living terracotta those divine babies whom no cheap reproduction can ever stale. (Forster, *A Room with a View*: 23)

(6-47) [...] at that moment Father turned towards her and said: [...] (Mansfield, *Six Years After*: 345)

(6-48) Months, perhaps years later, she woke up in a small, bare cell. (White, *The House of Clouds*: 57)

(6-49) Someone, Louis perhaps, carried her up flights and flights of steps. (White, *The House of Clouds*: 55)

In such cases the sentence is both *subjective* (the subject-oriented element can only be interpreted with reference to a subject-of-consciousness) and *perspectively non-situated* (no perspectival focus is introduced, because the sentence is not a state). As a result the perspectival status of the sentence will be contrastive: although the aspectual structure of the sentence does not invite the construction of a perspectival focus, the existence of a perspectival focus has to be assumed for the interpretation of the subject-oriented feature(s). Because of the aspectual structure of the sentence (which creates the impression that the described state of affairs is a fact rather than a subjective observation), it seems natural to ascribe its subjective content to the narrator in her role as fiction-creating authority. But there is cause for hesitation: the emotional or subjective colouring of the subject-oriented feature(s) is at odds with the objective role the narrator assumes, and it is, on the basis of pragmatic

inferences, more plausible to attribute it to a character in the scene.

This impression is usually reinforced by the fact that the character concerned has functioned as subject-of-consciousness at earlier points in the narrative (this is the case in all the above examples). Moreover, the narrative will often proceed to the introduction of a perspectival focus by means of a state, with the character concerned being the most salient subject-of-consciousness. The following example illustrates this:

(6-50) And Lisa [...] sees *them* standing together in the middle of the room
[...] and her stomach churns. (Are they having a row?) (Lively, *Moon*
Tiger: 48) [the italicised item here occurs in the original text and serves
as subject-oriented feature]

Perspectivally non-situated sentences which contain subject-oriented features thus contain indications of two differently-oriented perspectives: that of the narrator as narrative authority, and that of a character as subject. Those conflicting perspectives are maintained in a structure of undecidability.

6.8 Conclusion

In this dissertation we have advanced the idea that the perspectival characteristics of sentences in narrative fiction can be captured more precisely if their *aspectual type* is taken into account.

We have argued that highlighting a contingency relation between consecutive sentences creates a distancing effect, while making salient some kind of topical coherence between them conveys a sense of perspectival immediacy.

We have also argued that sentences which exhibit a *state* profile always introduce a perspectival focus. This means that, upon encountering a state, the reader has to determine which individual in the text occupies its perspectival focus. She will try to do so on the basis of intrasentential and contextual information and pragmatic inferences, which may make a particular individual in the text the most salient subject-of-consciousness for a state.

Nevertheless the question as to whose perspective is being represented often cannot be answered decisively. We have shown that the perspectival focus of a state (or state complex)

will not exhibit any perspectival ambiguities if the state or state complex encodes the present tense and occurs in a narrative with a personalised narrator; in this type of narrative perspectival foci are always occupied by the narrator. In all other types of narratives, however, perspectival foci are in principle ambiguous: even if context and pragmatic inferences make one potential subject-of-consciousness more salient than others, the underlying perspectival ambiguity is never completely eliminated.

Sentences in narrative thus need not commit themselves to the identification of one subject responsible for their semantic content: within the same sentence, various perspectives may exist in a structure of unresolved plurality.

The main emphasis in our approach was on theory. A fuller exploration of its implications would involve a more detailed analysis of longer passages from novels and short stories, to establish how a writer may exploit various ways of introducing and refracting perspective to create various stylistic effects.

At another level, the analysis proposed here could be tested against particular texts by exploring how perspectival ambiguity may constitute a major thematic concern of an individual work of fiction. Sentences which represent perspective incorporate a more general quality of literary texts which is often viewed as essential to their genre—viz. the fact that they need not commit themselves to one definite meaning. Literary texts specifically highlight the capacity of language to present itself as not exclusively belonging to a particular subject, and, because of this, to reveal the doubling of the speaking subject. It would be interesting to investigate how a pre-occupation with this problem manifests itself at various other levels of individual novels and short stories.

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